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DRELINCOURT AND RODALVI;

OR,

MEMOIRS

OF

TWO NOBLE FAMILIES.

A NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES.

By Mrs. BYRON,

AUTHOR OF ANTI-DELPHINE.

VOL. I.

The web of our life is of a mingled yarn; good and ill together: our virtues would be proud if our faults whipp'd them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues. *Shakespeare*

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PREFACE.

TO amuse without injuring, and to instruct without offending, is the highest aim of the following pages.

They were written in a retirement almost amounting to solitude, at the request of a beloved and lamented friend, whose hours of languor, during a lingering illness, were occasionally relieved by the perusal of them; whose partiality encouraged, and whose judgement approved them.

The

The praise which made the performance of this work, a pleasure, can no longer be bestowed, and therefore that of the public is less anxiously desired, for the satisfaction which it might once have given, cannot now be shared.

The approbation of the wise and good is however always valuable, and they must be undeserving of it, who are insensible of its worth.

To obtain it for these volumes, the design must be considered more than the execution; and the severity of criticism must be forgotten in the consideration that it would be ill-employed on a subject of which affection prompted the undertaking,

and

and for the errors and imperfections of which, the compassionate will accept the excuse of its having been begun and ended in the most trying moments of affliction.

DRELINCOURT AND RODALVI

CHAP. I.

There, in domestic virtue rich and great,
As erst in public, 'mid his wide domain,
Long in primeval patriarchal state,
The lord, the judge, the father of the plain,
He dwelt; and with him in the golden chain
Of wedded faith, ylink'd a matron sage
Aye dwelt; sweet partner of his joy and pain,
Sweet charmer of his youth, friend of his age,
Skill'd to improve his bliss, his sorrow to assuage.

WEST.

AMONG the innumerable villas which grace the banks of the Arno, in the neighbourhood of Florence, none were more distinguished by elegance than that of the Marchese di Rodalvi, who had early in life resigned the bustle of the world, to enjoy the pleasures of rational retirement, enriched with books, and enlivened by the occasional society of

friends, whose cultivated minds, and polished manners were congenial to his own.

During six months, the Marchese had considered himself particularly fortunate in having been favoured with a visit from Lord Drelincourt, an English nobleman, to whom he had been attached from his youth, and who had been advised to try the efficacy of a warm climate, towards the restoration of his health, which he had lost by an indefatigable attendance on politics, and vexation from seeing his schemes frustrated and his services neglected.

Frederick Augustus Courtney, Baron Courtney, Earl of Drelincourt, was, at this period of our history, forty-seven years of age, tall and of a noble figure, his countenance expressive and thoughtful, tho' terrible in anger, of which, however, it seldom assumed the appearance; its general character was that of benevolence, tho' his penetrating dark eyes sometimes darted such

such inquiring glances, that they, who from conscious depravity could not bear their scrutiny, sought to conceal the embarrassment which it occasioned by calling it designing and morose. But artifice was a stranger to Lord Drelincourt's breast, and would have been equally abhorred by him as a crime, and despised as a meanness. He thought, with Francis the First, that "foi de gentilhomme," was the strongest assertion which could be required; and his own spotless honour was a convincing proof, that, from him, it was all that was necessary. A faithful subject, a tender husband, an affectionate parent, and a sincere friend, could Lord Drelincourt be otherwise than respected? When we add, that he was a kind master, an indulgent landlord, the hope of the poor, and the champion of distress; many of our readers will condemn us for exhibiting "a faultless monster which the world never saw;" but we are too well acquainted with human nature to insult

their experience by asserting, that we draw a perfect character from real life: no, though we are mortified to confess it, Lord Drelincourt had a fault, which could at times eclipse all his virtues, " the fault by which e'en angels fell," was the black bane from which his heart had not been purified. Yet a very large portion of this besetting sin, which held even Lord Drelincourt in thraldom, had its foundation in virtue, mistaken virtue it is true, and carried to excess; but we may venerate the cause though we must condemn the effects.

Lord Drelincourt had been brought up with most exalted ideas of his prerogatives, which had produced in him the baneful effects of expecting more, from every one, than any one was inclined to grant. His father, after a licentious and disgraceful youth, of which the follies extended even to middle age, had retired with a ruined constitution, to estates, heavily encumbered by his past extravagancies.

gancies. He there conceived every day new disgust for his former excesses, and new resentments against those who had called themselves his friends, but who had foraken him, when they could no longer make him subservient to their designs; though many of them were infinitely his inferiors in rank, fortune, talents, and even virtues, few as he possessed at the time of his associating with them. He married, and entirely renounced the world, collecting all that was useful and desirable from it, into Castle Drelincourt, the seat of his ancestors, where he passed the remainder of his days, endeavouring to atone for his early misconduct by the practice, as he believed, of every duty, and by instilling into his son, the present Earl, who was the only pledge of his union, the knowledge and love of virtue. Unfortunately, the old Earl forgot to mention, that " the excellence, which makes all other excellencies amiable, is humility;" and the young Lord Courtney

not appear likely to know it by intuition; but then, to make amends for this omission, he was constantly warned to preserve inviolate the dignity of his rank; past times were expatiated on with rapture to him, and contrasted with the present age, to guard him against its degeneracy. His youthful imagination was fired with tales of the valour and magnificence of his ancestors, he sighed to see the castle once more filled with armed men, with ladies fair and barons bold; his young head ran on tilts and tournaments, rebellions and sieges, and before he was fifteen years of age, he had learnt to regard every thing modern with contempt or indignation; but what may appear very surprising, a further acquaintance with the world, on which he had looked with disgust from the retirement of Castle Drelincourt, did not contribute to alter his opinion. If any thing more had been necessary to warp the mind of Lord Courtney, and cloud it with prejudice, it would have been

been effected by the flatteries and absurd conduct of his aunts, the maiden sisters of the Earl. by whose extravagance they had been deprived of their portions, which were unluckily left by their father in his son's hands, until they should marry; and could we suppose interest ever to influence matrimony, we should fear that the poor ladies in losing their property, lost also the probability of establishing themselves in the married state; certain it is, that from the time in which it was pretty confidently whispered that their brother, perhaps through the hope of changing his luck, had ventured their fortunes at a fashionable gaming house, from that time their admirers grew more respectful in their adorations, which at last ended in that indisputable mark of true love, a timid silence; and the ladies, after having candidly acknowledged for ten years successively, that they should soon be thirty, were obliged to submit to waste the winter of their charms in the seclusion of their

brother's castle; where Lady Maud became a rigid devotee, and inveighed against the vices of the age with a most edifying countenance, in which the mortifications of worldly vanities were strongly depicted; whilst Lady Bertha, who was worthy of a better state than the cheerless one of celibacy, consoled herself by reading romances, and studying simples. These ladies vied with each other in fondness for their nephew, and whilst his father extolled the past, and Lady Maud railed against the present times, Lady Bertha told him tales of chivalry, compared him to Cyrus, and insisted that he should wear a plume of feathers in his hat. Lady Drelincourt, his mother, who was an amiable and domestic woman, smiled at the different follies of her husband and his sisters, contenting herself with exhorting her son to be punctual in his religious and moral duties, and never to demean himself by an ignoble action; reminding him always, that virtue was true

true nobility, and that where much was given much would be required.

Under the instructions of his aunt Bertha, Lord Courtney became, at a very early age, an adept in the art of love; and the charms of Lord Milbourne's youngest daughter made a powerful impression on his youthful mind. Lord Milbourne did not reside far from Castle Drelincourt: he was an amiable man, and of considerable talents, but a numerous family and confined income, rendered his residence in the country rather a matter of necessity than of choice; it was, however, regarded as a very fortunate event by the youthful lovers, who were thereby enabled to see each other frequently; and by the time that the lady was thirteen years of age, and Lord Courtney fifteen, the attachment between them became so apparent, that it could not be concealed from the Earl, who thinking that absence might be the most effectual means of conquering this juvenile pas-

sion, determined upon a more public education for his son, than he had at first intended; and Lord Courtney, accordingly, left his parental fire-side, to be initiated into the mysteries of Eton College. He there met with the present Marchese di Rodalvi, whose father died a short time before, and he having always expressed a wish that his son should be educated in England, the young Marchese was sent thither by his uncle, who was left his guardian. The friendship of these two young men commenced with their introduction to each other, and was strengthened by going together to the university. After their studies were completed, Lord Courtney gained the Earl's permission to accompany his friend on the grand tour, from which, however, he was recalled by the afflicting news of his mother's death, and the dangerous illness of his father. He flew on the wings of filial love, and arrived at Castle Drelincourt, in time to receive his father's last blessing, and exhortations

hortations to preserve inviolate the honour of his ancestors. The young Earl was much affected at the sudden deprivation of both his parents, but Lady Maud checked the violence of his grief, by telling him it was unchristian to "mourn as they without hope," and that he ought to be grateful that the ravages of death had spared his aunts.

As soon as the Earl could bear to think of consolation, he felt that it could be imparted the most effectually by a lovely and virtuous woman. The object of his boyish attachment had never been erased from his mind, and now rose in his estimation on every succeeding interview; he therefore resolved to follow the early impulse of his heart, and in a few months he had the pleasure of requesting his Italian friend to visit England once more, to witness his marriage. The Marchese came; time flew on "pleasure's rosy pinions;" and when he was obliged to tear himself from the Earl's fascinating society,

which had tempted him repeatedly to countermand the orders that he had given for his return, he found himself so desolate and solitary, amidst all the gaieties of Florence, that he thought the wisest thing which he could do, would be to follow the example of his friend, and to enter into the married state, in which he had recently witnessed an enviable degree of felicity. He accordingly soon after led to the altar a beautiful and accomplished woman, whose virtues and society from that time, constituted all his happiness. After this event, the intercourse between the friends became limited, for some time, to the exchange of letters, but they still continued to take the most anxious interest in each others' concerns: The satisfaction of the Earl in his union would have been complete, but for the vexation occasioned by the failure of male issue. The first addition to his family was a girl, and though he was disappointed, yet parental feelings were too exquisite to leave any

any sense of mortification. The next year produced another girl, and Lord Drelincourt could not but think, that a boy would have been better. The poor babe, as if conscious that it was an unwished-for guest, drooped and soon left a world where it had not found a kind reception. Lady Drelincourt wept, and regarded the loss of her child as a judgment from heaven for not being contented with its decrees; but she had hopes again, and again produced a female, whose beauty, even from its birth, interested all beholders. Lord Drelincourt remembered his lady's mortification the preceding year, and disguised his own; but he wrote to his friend, and candidly acknowledged that his disappointment was severely felt. The Marchese's answer ought to have reconciled him to it: "Whilst you, my dear friend," said he, "repine at the dispensations of Providence in sending you three daughters successively, the Marchesa and I can scarcely think it possible, that a parent's sensations should be otherwise than

than delightful. Alas! they are what we have never known; the want of them is the only imperfection in our domestic happiness, and I see a cloud sometimes come over the lovely countenance of the Marchesa, when we visit those who, more fortunate than ourselves, are enjoying the caresses and endearments of their children. Would that it had pleased Heaven to grant us the little girl, whom you lost! we should not then have one wish incomplete." Heaven at length heard the prayers of both parties. The Marchesa pressed to her enraptured bosom a lovely girl, in the same month that the Earl was rendered happy by the birth of a son. This joyful event diffused felicity over Castle Drelincourt, where it took place. One of the grooms accidentally met Lady Drelincourt's woman, and hearing the tidings, ran without any ceremony to acquaint the Earl, who was walking up and down his study in great anxiety. "O my Lord!" exclaimed the poor fellow, almost breathless

less with the speed that he had made; "the child is born, guess what it is." The Earl entirely overlooking the unusual familiarity of his domestic, replied in doubting accents, not daring to speak as he hoped, "A girl, perhaps?" "No, my Lord, no," said the delighted fellow, "it is a boy, a fine boy! and may he live to be as good a master to us as your Lordship is." The Earl cordially joined in this wish, and dismissing the messenger of the happiest tidings he had ever heard, with a golden testimony of his approbation, he fell on his knees in gratitude to Heaven, returning thanks for the birth of his son, and invoking every blessing on his infant head. Two years after this, another daughter was born, which completed the Earl's family; and the Marchesa had likewise a son within a year after the birth of her daughter. We shall pass over the succeeding years in silence, in order to resume our narrative at the period when we first introduced the parties to our reader's notice.

Chap. II.

Regard the world with cautious eye,
Nor raise your expectation high.
See that the balanc'd scales be such,
You neither hope nor fear too much;
For disappointment's not the thing,
'Tis pride and passion point the sting.
Life is a sea where storms must rise,
'Tis folly talks of cloudless skies.
He who contracts his swelling sail
Eludes the fury of the gale.

COTTON.

LORD Drelincourt had received such benefit from a winter's residence in Italy, that he became impatient to return to England; but he was still detained by the reluctance which he felt to leave his friend, whom he might perhaps never see again. At length he resolved to fix a day for his departure, and to request, at the same time, that the Marchese's son, Edmund, might be permitted to accompany him; "It will soften the pain of our separation,

separation, my dear friend," said the Earl; "in your son, I shall every day be reminded of what you were, when our intimacy commenced, and in that pleasing recollection, I shall forget the distance by which we shall be separated." The Earl's request was too kind, and advantageous, for the young Count, to be denied; yet he was so dear to his parents, and his society was so valuable, that it could not be granted without reluctance. But they read in Edmund's eyes, the desire, natural and praiseworthy in youth, of becoming acquainted with new objects, and they were unable to withstand the slightest appearance of entreaty, for he had never hitherto formed a wish, to which they could not consent with pleasure: it was therefore finally determined, that the Earl should leave the villa, at the expiration of one week, and that Edmund should be the companion of his journey. The Marchesa wept every day, until the arrival of the fatal one, which was to separate

separate her from her beloved son, for the first time since his birth. His sister, the lively Everilda, who was his senior by fifteen months, he had so far gained over to his cause, as even to plead in its behalf, yet, notwithstanding this, when she saw the Earl's travelling chariot drive up to the door, she threw her arms around her brother's neck, protesting in an agony of tears that he should not leave her. Arguments were lost on her, for unfortunately, she had not been accustomed to listen to them; and when, at last Edmund was obliged to tear himself by force from her embraces, she was conveyed to her chamber in strong hysterics, and the Marchese and Marchesa forgot their grief for the departure of their son, in anxiety for their beloved daughter, their first-born, the idol of her doating parents. Edmund's youthful heart soon recovered from the sorrow naturally felt on leaving home, particularly for the first time; a home, too, endeared as his was to him by every indulgence

indulgence and elegant gratification; but he had hitherto been confined entirely to it, and he now anticipated with laudable ardour, the improvements which he might reap from a change of scene: nor was his animation lost upon Lord Drelincourt, whose feelings were soothed by the tenderness and sensibility of his young friend.

It is not our intention to swell these pages unnecessarily, by a hackneyed description of the places through which our travellers were to pass, as we do not approve of giving to a novel the appearance of a book of modern travels, tho' modern travels sometimes assume that of a novel. Therefore, whilst they are quietly pursuing their route, and seeing every thing useful or delightful, we shall amuse our readers, by sketching the appearance and disposition of the young man, whom Lord Drelincourt had honoured with his regard.

Edmund di Rodalvi was, at this period,

in

in his nineteenth year, of a most engaging figure, tall and slender; it was scarcely possible to see one more finely formed, or where dignity and grace were more happily conspicuous: his complexion was brown, and his visage oval; fine teeth, and most brilliant dark eyes, gave expression to a countenance, which, though sometimes beaming with the most speaking animation, was in general, more interesting from a melancholy sweetness uncommon in a young man, and yet more so in one of his nation; but Edmund was the child of sensibility, his disposition, naturally gentle, had become yet milder under the influence of a domestic education, and it was only on important occasions, that the fire of an Italian darted from his eyes, and shone with resplendence in his countenance. His information, even without taking his youth into consideration, was great, and his accomplishments numerous. In acquiring them, time had flown unperceived, though spent in perfect retirement,

ment; but he had contemplated the world at a distance with delight, and now exulted in the opportunity that he should have, of comparing the theory of solitude with the practice of society.

Unmolested by any accident, Lord Drelincourt arrived in London with his young companion, who had every day risen in his esteem. They alighted at an elegant house in Berkeley-square, and whilst the Earl's heart beat with anxious solicitude for his family, Edmund's experienced an unusual flutter, at the idea of being introduced to those, with whom he was to be an inmate for some months, and on whom he already felt dependant for his future comforts in England. At that moment he reverted to the dear friends whom he had left in Italy, and shall we acknowledge that the recollection of them filled his fine eyes with tears, which we can only beg may be excused, on the consideration of his domestic education and filial affection: absurdities we

acknowledge almost unheard of at pre sent. Fortunately, Edmund's reveries were interrupted by the opening of the door, and the next minute the Earl found himself clasped in the warm embrace of his affectionate son, a young man of engaging appearance, who was immediately introduced to Edmund by the Earl, saying, "This is Lord Courtney, my son:" then turning, added to his son, "The Count Rodalvi, whom I desire you to esteem." Edmund, pleased with Lord Courtney's countenance, advanced to offer his hand, but he was mortified to find his overtures received only by a distant bow, and a formal welcome to England. Poor Edmund thought of Italy again, and never felt more forcibly his distance from his friends, than when he heard Lord Drelincourt's anxious inquiries concerning those dear to him. Lord Courtney informed them, that his mother and sisters were at Castle Drelincourt, and that all the world were in the country,

as

as he had been in town above a week, in expectation of his father's arrival, and had not met with a single acquaintance. Edmund thought, that amid the numerous crouds of people, they had seen as they entered London, (for it was a fine Sunday in July), all the world might have met acquaintance, and he began to fear that Lord Courtney was one of the new sect, known in the present day by the name of *puppyists*, though after the cool reception which he had received from him, he candidly acknowledged to himself, that he could not precisely form an an impartial judgment of his character. Lord Drelincourt declared his intentions of setting off the next day to his seat; and Edmund retired to his couch, wisely forgetting his cares by enlisting under the banners of Morpheus.

The next morning, Edmund quitted his apartment at so early an hour, that he began to imagine, he should have ample time for solitary reflection, before either any

of the gentlemen appeared. In a few minutes, however, Lord Courtney entered with so intelligent and benevolent a countenance, that though Edmund had been disappointed in his expectations from it the preceding evening, he could not help forming the same again, and they were now nearly resolved into certainty, by the different style in which he was accosted; friendliness, goodnature, and native sincerity, appeared in every word that the young Lord uttered. Edmund, for a moment, regretted the fickleness which must prompt such different modes of conduct, and then remembered it no longer.

Lord Drelincourt, kindly waving his first intention of leaving town immediately, delayed his departure three days longer, to give Edmund an opportunity of viewing the public buildings, and other objects worthy of notice; and as Lord Courtney was very active in his office of *cicerone*, Edmund saw in that short time enough of the capital to understand the usual

usual topics of conversation, and looked forward with pleasure to the winter, when he should be able to study it with the attention requisite, to become really acquainted with a place containing such varied gratifications for curiosity, and so many inexhaustible sources of information.

CHAP. III.

What so sweet,
So beautiful on earth, and, ah! so rare
As kindred love and family repose!

YOUNG.

CASTLE-Drelincourt was situated in the most beautiful and fertile part of Devonshire, and was one of those places which nature and art appear emulous to adorn: whilst the former bestowed on it every advantage of situation, salubrious air, luxuriant woods, and crystal springs; the latter, exulting in her powers, displayed her ingenuity to the utmost extent of the most refined cultivation. By her magic wand, every part of the grounds inspired sensations of tranquillity and admiration, and the hues of the different trees and shrubs, were contrasted with such exquisite variety, or so gradually blended into each

each other, that the eye was alternately amused and refreshed.

The building itself was awfully grand: It had been the residence of the Earls of Drelincourt for centuries.

"Time's gradual touch had mouldered into beauty many a tow'r,
Which when it frown'd in all its battlements
Was only terrible; and many a fane monastic,
Which when deck'd in all its spires,
Serv'd but to feed some pamper'd abbot's pride,
And awe th' unlettered vulgar."

The massy structure of the edifice, plainly told that it had been erected in times, when strength was the only security against oppression. Its situation was admirably adapted to its character. Embosomed deep in woods, it was guarded on every side by hills, gradually swelling into mountains almost inaccessible: on some of the eminences were still seen the ruins of fortresses, that, in former times, had guarded those passes, which if gained by the enemy, would have en-

abled them to starve the proud castle below into obedience. In the front, the sea bounded the possessions of the Earl, who was particularly attached to this seat of his ancestors, for it had been the scene of many valiant deeds, and in itself possessed every magnificence, and comfort, whilst the surrounding country was fine, and rich in noble seats.

The party arrived at the castle towards the evening of the day after they left London. The congratulations of the domestics, were fervent though respectful, and were received with great complacency by Lord Drelincourt, who in a few minutes had the pleasure of embracing his Lady and daughters. The most heartfelt delight beamed in the Earl's eyes, and tears of tenderness suffused those of the ladies. Whilst they overwhelmed him with caresses and inquiries, poor Edmund who felt himself rather overlooked in the hurry of the scene, after the first congratulations,

amused

amused himself by studying the countenances of the ladies, who composed the Earl's family, he began with Lady Drelincourt, whose matronly figure happily united tenderness and dignity; an air of serene gravity spread itself over her features; the general expression of which, was calculated to gain the esteem and affection of all who studied it. Her eldest daughter, Lady Rosamond Courtney, next claimed attention; this lady was at that age, when the features begin to gain in expression, what they may perhaps lose in bloom, she had nearly attained her twenty-sixth year, but although she united every elegant accomplishment, and great information, to a face and figure of the first class of beauty, she still remained unsolicited in marriage; and a sense of the injustice shewn to her charms, threw a cloud over her fine features, which sometimes betrayed a degree of hauteur, increased in proportion as she thought herself neglected. She was of a com-

manding height, and the whole style of her beauty, was that of the majestic haughty Juno, strongly contrasting with the yet more perfect, and truly feminine charms of Lady Maria, the second daughter, who was now reclined on a sofa, from which she had only risen for a few moments to embrace her father; an air of langour appeared in her, which would seem to have been caused by indisposition, had not a complexion fair as alabaster, and of brilliant clearness, heightened by a fine peach-like bloom, forbidden the idea. Her blue eyes were shaded by long silken brown lashes, and a few ringlets of the same colour, played on her polished forehead, whilst the broad lace of her cap, added delicacy to the features, which it partly concealed. Altogether Edmund thought that he had never seen so lovely a woman, and he might have gazed on her much longer, had not his eyes met those of the object whom he was admiring, and he hastily turned them from her,

to

to the youngest daughter, Lady Emma, whom Lord Courtney had called to partake of his chair, and who was listening to her father, with a countenance of such animated sweetness, that Edmund wondered how he could have overlooked it before, and on a more minute examination, he was delighted with its sensibility and intelligence. She was simply attired in a muslin frock, her flaxen hair curled in natural ringlets. which were chiefly fastened by a comb, though a few escaped their confinement to sport upon her ivory neck; her eyes were of a darker blue than her sister Maria's, and the lashes were yet more beautiful. The bloom in her cheeks was perhaps more interesting, by not being permanent, for in general the lilly was predominant, but when ever she spoke, or met the eye of admiration or attention, the rose, faithful to its trust, returned in its liveliest tints, and proclaimed itself the herald of the most attractive innocence, and unaffected mo-

desty; her figure was *petite*, but formed by the hand of symmetry, and every movement was dictated by ease and natural grace. Such were the females to whom Edward had been introduced, when their first emotions began to subside, the parties retired to dress for dinner, after which, the remainder of the day was passed *en famille*, and before it was over, Edmund began to feel quite at home, in the amiable and acomplished family circle, by which he was surrounded.

We have said that the Earl was partial to the seat of his ancestors; he was indeed never so happy as when at Castle Drelincourt, and anxious to make all connected with him share in his pleasure, he spared no expence, or indulgence, which could make the country desirable for a residence. The day after his arrival, he began to concert schemes for the amusement, and gratification of his family, and proposed to celebrate his return to England, by giving an entertainment and ball, to the

the surrounding nobility and gentry, from whom, congratulations and inquiries poured in, as soon as the Earl was known to be at the castle. Cards were accordingly sent out, and the intermediate time was agreeably employed by Edmund, in examining the books, and paintings, of which the Earl had a fine collection, and every room proclaimed the literary taste of its possessor, whilst the elegance of the decorations, and appropriate ornaments, reflected the highest credit on the ladies, under whose directions they were executed.

Lady Rosamond designed admirably, and one room was appropriated to a series of her drawings from Milton's works. This room was fitted up with peculiar neatness, and in it the ladies assembled in the mornings, when they did not choose to be alone; it communicated with the library on one side, and on the other with a noble gallery, in which were a variety of musical instruments, and

which was chiefly devoted to the delights of harmony.

Edmund every day gained esteem in the family, and every day became more tenderly attached to it. Lord Courtney treated him with the most unreserved friendship, and begged that he might no longer be addressed by his title, as the sound of your lordship, threw an air of ceremony over their most confidential discourses.

The character of this young Lord, though abounding in inconsistencies was truly amiable: he had great abilities, and a quickness of preception almost incredible, which might have rendered him one of the first characters of the day, but it was unhappily blended with such versability of pursuit, that no science, or talent, was thought of by him longer, than whilst he was acquiring it. He played brilliantly, but could never practise long enough to do it with correctness. He had a taste for drawing, but by the time he

he had laid his implements ready for sketching his outlines, he recollected an engagement, and his imperfect design was reserved for completion at some more distant period. He spoke French, Italian and German, with fluency and strict grammatical propriety; he was an excellent classic, and had a taste for composition, both in prose and verse; he would sometimes be seized with a love of study, which would confine him to his library for weeks, in which time he would begin twenty different subjects, proceed happily through the greater part of his discussions, and finish none of them. He rapidly acquired a knowledge of natural history and chemistry, and when acquired, he as rapidly laid the pursuit of them aside. He had likewise a turn for mechanics, and experimental philosophy, in short, there was scarcely either art or science, on which he could not speak, at least well enough to prove, that very little attention would enable him to fully comprehend

the subject in debate. His disposition was as various, as were his acquirements, he could pass alternately "from grave to gay, from lively to severe," he would one moment hold a serious argument with a lady on the trimming for her dress, and the next learnedly discuss with a scholar, the loves of Dido and Eneas. He was naturally generous even to prodigality, disdained a mean action, was warm in his affections, and sincere in his attachments. He had however been not a little spoiled by the unlimited indulgence shewn to him from infancy, in consequence of which, though health and spirits, gave him the appearance of uninterrupted good humour, it was yet depending often on the caprice of the moment, and was, like that of many others, the most apparent when he was the most pleased. But his parents were very happy in him, and were with reason proud of his acquirements, his father as a literary man, was gratified with his taste for reading

reading and composition, and the praises, which had been justly bestowed on some of his most finished attempts in the latter, gave the highest pleasure to the Earl, who rightly thought, that a man of rank ought at least to be a patron, and judge of literature, and of the fine arts. His mother was delighted with his pleasing appearance and manners, and could not conceal from him, that she thought him one of the finest young men of the age, in which Henry perfectly coincided, but laughed at the same time, with such vivacity, that his sisters knew not whether he meant to declare his own opinion, or goodnaturedly to ridicule that of Lady Drelincourt. The Earl rejoiced that his son had no taste for inferior company; on the contrary he was perhaps too fastidious, for his own family united so many pleasing accomplishments to solid information, and polished manners, that he expected from others, more then it was probable he should find, and disappointment

ment sometimes gave rise to ill-founded disgust. Edmund was a companion the most suited to his taste of any that he had ever seen, not that their dispositions were exactly similar, but as discords heighten harmony in music, so the pensive tenderness of Edmund's temper formed an agreeable contrast to the volatile warmth of Henry's; their attachment every day gained strength, and at last Edmund told his friend, how much he had been hurt by the coldness with which he had been at first received by him. "My dear fellow," replied Henry with his usual frankness, "I saw immediately that I should esteem you, but I confess that my father's manner was not likely to make me do it more willingly, "This is the Count Rodalvi whom I *desire* you to esteem," his determined style of speaking piqued me, and I resolved not to comply immediately with his *desire*, though I mortified myself by delay." This little explanation set Edmund at ease, as before it took place, his pleasure in Henry's friendship was sometimes

sometimes damped, by a fear of its inconstancy. With a temper so amiable, conduct so irreproachable, and talents so promising as we have described, it is almost unnecessary to add that Lord Courtney constituted the delight of his family, and that all the Earl's ideas and expectations of felicity, had their source in this beloved and valuable son.

"Swift to reward a parent's fears
A parent's hopes to crown,
Roll on in peace ye blooming years
That rear him to renown:
When in his finished form and face,
Admiring multitudes shall trace,
The beauties of his line combin'd;
The courteous yet majestic mien,
The liberal smile the look serene,
The great and gentle mind."

Chap. IV.

Up springs the dance, along the lighted dome
Mixed and involved a thousand sprightly ways!
The glittering court effuses every pomp,
The circle deepens, beam'd from gaudy robes,
Tapers and sparkling gems, and radient eyes
A soft effulgence o'er the palace waves.

THOMSON.

AT length the day fixed on for the ball arrived, and Lord Drelincourt who was fond of his domestics and tenantry, (perhaps not less so from considering them in some measure as his vassals) resolved they should share in the general hilarity. He therefore ordered the good old English fare of roast beef and plumb pudding, to be abundantly provided for them, and that it should be concluded by a dance in the hall, which was at such a distance from the part of the castle, in which the ball was to be held, that there was no probability,

probability, of the sounds of rustic mirth, interfering with the refined enjoyments of the fashionable guests, who moreover, probably would not begin their festivity, until that of the honest farmers and their cherry-cheeked daughters was ended.

Lord Drelincourt looked with pleasure on his rustic guests, as they were seated round his hospitable board, in the hall of his forefathers. His early prejudices returned in all their force, and his liberal mind, enlarged views, and humane disposition, did not prevent a sigh rising in his breast, when he reflected that the "age of chivalry was past." His dependants all loved, though they feared him, and as they rose on his entrance, to congratulate him with respectful ardour on his safe return to his native country, he thought of his father, and of the pleasure which a similar spectacle would have afforded him, he sighed involuntarily, a tear trembled in his eye, "a sigh, a tear so sweet, he wish'd not to control." But soon

company

company of a more exalted, though perhaps less valuable class, demanded his attention.

The first carriage which arrived, was one of dark green, drawn slowly by four greys, the coachman and attendants looking as if they had retained their situations from time immemorial, and the two ladies who alighted from it, were to all appearance remnants of great antiquity. They were the Earl's maiden aunts, of whom we have already made honorable mention. He received them in great state at the top of the stairs; Lady Bertha gave him her hand to kiss, and he then led her into the drawing room, where he introduced Edmund to her, and to her sister, as a young friend for whom he had a particular regard, Lady Maud hearing a foreign name, was rather ungracious in her compliments, but lady Bertha said with a benevolent smile, "You are welcome, courteous sir, to our island, and I trust that you will find in it, the hospitality

ity which ought always to be shewn to strangers, particularly if distressed, which I hope however, will never be your case." She then took her seat, leaving Edmund much embarrassed what answer to make, as he did not perfectly understand the epithet of courteous, which he had never before heard in conversation; he supposed therefore from the singular dress and appearance of the ladies, that they came from some distant province; he however thanked Lady Bertha, and told her in reply to her welcome, that he could willingly have suffered any distress, on condition of becoming acquainted with a country so delightful, and with whose fair inhabitants every stranger must be charmed. Lady Bertha had not heard so gallant a speech for many years, and mentally comparing Edmund to Oroondates, she rose and made him a profound curtsey. Edmund returned it with a low bow, and then took his seat by Lady Emma, whose cheeks were dyed in blushes at the characteristic speech

speech of her aunt. Soon after, a Mr. Fetcher was announced; this gentleman was a relation of Lady Drelincourt; he was a widower, and the early loss of the object of his fondest affections, had communicated a degree of misanthropy to his feelings, which was sometimes evident from his expressions, and made him appear severe, but he was only so in words, for in deeds he was benevolence personified. He had married against the consent of his wife's relations, who objected to his small fortune, and she, being of a delicate constitution and susceptible disposition, felt their displeasure so keenly, that she fell into a decline; and three years after their union left him an inconsolable mourner. He was, however, a parent, and for the sake of his little girl, he resolved to conquer his grief, the violence of which would inevitably interfere with his duty to her. Accordingly, he went into society to amuse his mind, but being uninterested in it, he lashed its vices,

vices, ridiculed its follies, and sometimes unjustly accused it of the insipidity, which his peculiar disappointmeuts made him feel, amidst what it offers as pleasures. He was succeeded by a young lady about sixteen years of age, a fine figure, and so conscious of it, that in endeavouring to make it finer, she distorted its natural elegance by affectation. Lord Drelincourt immediately, with much respect and affection introduced her as Lady Harriett Parkhurst. She was the daughter of the deceased Earl of Lindsey, who had been Lord Drelincourt's particular friend, he died whilst the Earl was abroad, and had left this much loved daughter to his care; a charge which was received with melancholy pleasure. It had been always the wish of these friends to unite their families by means of their children, and Lord Courtney, and Lady Harriett had been long acquainted with their parents' intentions. In interested views the match possessed too many advantages not to be ardently

ardently desired by Lord Drelincourt. His ward was of a great family, being grand-daughter to the Duke of Moreton, and related to many of the first peers in the realm, there was a probability that her fortune would be very large, but her mind, it must be confessed, had been hitherto neglected. She was, however, very young, and was to reside with the Earl until she was of age; he therefore flattered himself that in the society of his family she could not fail to improve. No other guests being expected till the evening, the party sat down to dinner. Lady Maud looked with a sour aspect on the Earl's visitor and ward; Lady Bertha smiled good humouredly on all around her; Mr. Fletcher pleased every one by his animated conversation; and Lady Harriett, though she felt a little awe at the idea of being under the immediate care of her guardian, was delighted to find that he had sent for her to make one at the ball, and fell into a deep study how to

to make the most becoming dress of her mourning.

Among the surrounding nobility and gentry, there had lately arrived a newly created peer, who by dint of paying enormously for his ground, and being contented with little more, than was barely necessary for his house and gardens, had been enabled to fix his residence very near Lord Drelincourt, much to the dissatisfaction of that nobleman, who regarded with indignation and contempt the frequent and often illtimed elevations in rank, which had taken place within his remembrance.

Of exalted birth, and descended from a long train of ancestors, who had never stained their nobility by an unworthy action, he had a nice sense of what was due to every scale in society; always willing to acknowledge a superior himself, he could ill brook a contrary behaviour in others, and though no man entertained more liberal ideas than he did, respecting

commerce

commerce, which he justly considered as the source of the power and prosperity of the nation, he yet thought, that many respectable merchants, were converted into insignificant and subordinate characters by succeeding in their wishes to reach a higher situation, than that which they might have filled with probity and abilities. Perhaps Lord Drelincourt's ideas of the deference due to noble blood, would not have been so exalted, had he not conceived that in the present rage for levelling, or as they are more fashionably termed liberal opinions, its claims were unjustly neglected. He could not bear to see the possessors of rank, degrading it by associating with men in every respect inferior to them, and adopting the manners of those, with whom they disgrace themselves, by being familiar, merely to feel a licentious ease, a carelessness of conduct, and to be applauded as good fellows, or merry companions without any buckram, or nonsense

sense in their composition. Lord Drelincourt mortified by the manners of the age, unfortunately fell into the contrary error; if some granted too little he exacted too much, and as extremes are always prejudicial, he made the rank which he admired, appear less amiable, and sometimes ridiculous, by the sternness with which he repressed every attempt towards familiarity. Unluckily for Lord Drelincourt's prejudices, it happened that the only one of the mushroom peers with whom he was in a manner compelled to associate, was a man of so contracted an education, and of manners so coarse, that an acquaintance with him could not fail to increase the earl's disgust.

Many of those, for whom fortune has paved the way to honors, join such extensive information and knowledge of the world, with real politeness and upright principles, that they must be considered as an acquisition to any society, and no disgrace to the British peerage;

but Lord Dunderton was not of this description; however he had left his card immediately on the Earl's arrival at the castle, and of course it was impossible to omit his family in the invitations to the ball. Lord Drelincourt was too humane ever to be unpolite, for he considered that man as unfit to live in society, who could without provocation, wilfully wound the feelings of another.

The company began to assemble at an early hour, and the dancing commenced with great spirit. Edmund had solicited Lady Rosamond's hand, but she was previously engaged to a Captain Clayton of the guards, whose entrance gave her visible pleasure, and by the respectful ardour of his complimentary inquiries, Edmund imagined him to be a lover and apparently a favoured one. Lady Maria likewise was engaged though she acknowledged it reluctantly, for the young Italian had already made an impression on her heart, that roused her from the languor of

of indolence into which she had unhappily fallen, from the idea of its being very irresistible and becoming. He was more successful in his application to Lady Emma, whose eloquent blood mantled in her cheeks as she consented to be his partner, and Edmund began to think that he had been fortunate in finding her sisters engaged.

Lord Courtney of course danced with Lady Harriett Parkhurst, and the Earl was delighted to hear his ward generally admired, for though she was far from being handsome, her figure was striking, and vanity gave animation to her countenance, whilst the embarrassment that she felt from her situation, wore the resemblance of an amiable modesty which made her appear extremely interesting. Henry came up to Edmund, when the set was finished to inquire what he thought of his bride elect, adding, "I have looked so successfully into her eyes, all the time we have been dancing, and seen myself

reflected in them so languishingly, that I dare say she thinks me on the rack of expectation, and that I shall be a most enraptured husband—not very well furnished in the upper story," continued he, laughing as he pointed to his forehead, "but that is not at all necessary." Edmund answered with truth that her appearance was pleasing, but that, of her mind he did not think there had been sufficient time to form a correct opinion. Henry smiled significantly, and left his friend, astonished at the indifference, with which he could acknowledge that he believed a woman deficient in sense, and yet think of connecting himself with her for life, by the most solemn ties. Edmund's reflections were however diverted by the sound of the music, which struck up a lively tune, and Lady Emma informed him he must choose another partner, as it was not customary to continue the same for more than two dances; this he was sorry to hear, as he was so well satisfied

fied with his present partner, that he felt no wish to change. She pleased without an effort to shine, no forced attentions were requisite to keep up hers, no inordinate flattery to charm her into good humour, gentle and unassuming, her manners harmonized with her partner's, if he was gay, she was cheerful, if he was grave, she became serious; many were dazzled by the majestic figure of Lady Rosamond, many allured by the languishing beauty of Lady Maria, but none who knew Lady Emma, could be insensible to her artless charms, and unaffected virtues. Edmund could not forbear expressing the reluctance with which he relinquished her hand; she blushed at the warmth of his expressions, not that they were so ardent as the fashionable cant of the day, with which the young men continually assailed her ears, but in Edmund they appeared natural, at least she perhaps wished to believe them so. At the very moment, when Emma's blushes made her appear doubly

interesting in Edmund's eyes, Henry came to request that he would dance with Miss Clayton, "you will find her a lively partner I assure you," said he "only do not bring her too near my aunt Maud, or you will probably have to defend her from the furious attacks of the old lady, as they by no means assimilate well." He then introduced Edmund to a pretty blooming girl, whose simplicity of dress, and pleasing appearance, left him to conjecture what there could be in her behaviour to distress Lady Maud's feelings. He had however no time for discovery, as his partner's place was at the top of the dance; he therefore led her there immediately. When they had gone down twenty couples, with a velocity which precluded the possibility of conversation, they arrived at the bottom of the set, and the young lady drawing a cambric handkerchief from her side, and rubbing her face in a manner which must have convinced the most sceptical, that she was indebted

indebted solely to nature for a fine complexion, exclaimed, "Cursedly hot, don't you think so?" Edmund thought that he did not hear rightly what she said, and lamented to himself, only having a knowledge of the English language from books, as he foresaw that the greatest attention, and nicety of oracular information, would be necessary, before he could feel perfectly at ease whilst sustaining a part in conversation, He however ventured to reply that having been used to a warm climate, he did not feel any inconvenience from the temperature in which they were at that time. "Oh," replied Miss Clayton, "I remember Courtney told me you were Italian, pray is there good hunting with you?" Edmund was again surprised, for he had never had the question put to him before by a lady, but he thought, as he had imagined of Lady Bertha, that she also might be from a distant province, where the customs were probably different. He therefore

replied with the utmost politeness, and began to inform her in what the field sports of Italy, differed from those which had been described to him in England. Miss Clayton listened with great attention, then told him that she could not bear the summer, as it deprived her of her most pleasing recreations, adding that she had given her favourite horse Highflyer, a breathing in the morning, to which circumstance she believed it might be owing, that she was in such a confounded heat, with only going down one dance. Edmund was rather disconcerted by language, which he could no longer entirely misunderstand, and began to wish, that the heat of which she so forcibly complained in the first set, might prevent her standing up for another, but she resumed her place with great alacrity, and Lady Emma at that instant going down the dance with the lightness and precision of a fairy, Miss Clayton said. " That girl dances like a sylph, and indeed she does every

every thing well, I like few maukish misses of quality, but she pleases every body." Edmnnd acquiesced in this opinion, praised her candor, and began to think her very agreeable, in spite of the provincial peculiarities of her dialect. "You think then," answered she, in return for his compliment, "that women can see no merit in each other; it might have been the case when there was more in your sex, but now let me tell you, there is too little to be jealous of it, consequently we can acknowledge perfection more cheerfully in each other, as we are not often dazzled by seeing it in the gentlemen." Edmund laughed at the compliment that she paid the male creation, and she continued, "I dare say you think Lady Emma a mere child, she does not look more than fifteen, and her sisters will not rectify the mistake. She is only just emancipated from the nursery, where luckily she has had the advantage of a very worthy and well-informed woman for her

governess, and companion, and her sisters would gladly have confined her there, until they were disposed of to advantage. Unfortunately however, Lady Rosamond reared her stately form amidst the circles of fashion, for a succession of winters, without any title courting her acceptance, and Lady Maria died away, and told all her nervous susceptibilities, and sensibilities, without finding any one to listen to them but female friends, who were somewhat wearied with hearing them too often; Lady Drelincourt then recollected that Lady Emma was eighteen years of age, and a very good girl, she therefore could not think of secluding her from the world any longer. In vain her sisters kindly urged the impropriety of bringing girls out too soon, in vain with unaffected sorrow, they adduced themselves as melancholy examples of its impolicy, Lady Drelincourt only replied, that they had thought the time very long until the arrival of their fourteenth year,

in

in which they were introduced into the gay world, at their earnest request, and if their expectations had been disappointed, she was sorry for it, but hoped that Emma would be more fortunate. This insinuation did not reconcile the elder branches to the plan, but their mother gained her point; Emma was released, and by dint of goodnature, sitting on her brother's knee, kissing papa before she goes to bed, and never interfering with her sister's imaginary conquests, they are fond of her, and always tell every one, that she is an amiable docile child, and will in a few years make a charming woman." Miss Clayton here finished the family biography, and Edmund was amused by the animated manner, in which she had delivered it, though he inwardly condemned the severity, with which she had mentioned ladies, one at least of whom, she ought to have respected, as it was evident that her brother, Captain Clayton felt towards Lady Rosamond, a sen-

timent more tender than that of esteem alone.

The dancing was now suspended, and an elegant room thrown open, where a collation was set out, with such taste and profusion, as formed a graifying sight to the eyes of the epicure, and a tempting one even to those of the abstemious.

In going into the supper room, Miss Clayton unfortunately met Lady Maud, who was in no very good humour, having lost her money at quadrille, the only game that she ever played. Clayton Hall was very near Courtney Lodge, where the old ladies had resided since the death of their brother, who had devised it to them; consequently Miss Clayton was an old acquaintance, and she made a very polite obeisance to Lady Maud, who scarcely condescended to observe it, exclaiming, "Bless me child, I did not know you, and indeed it is so long, since you have troubled yourself with calling at the lodge, that it would be no great wonder if I had forgotten

forgotten your face." "I am sure my Lady," replied Miss Clayton with affected humility, "I should have called at the lodge the other day, but seeing the windows closed, I feared there might be death in the house, I am happy to find that my anxieties for you, and Lady Bertha, have been groundless." "You knew very well I believe," grumbled the old lady, "that I always have the south front windows closed, to preserve my yellow damask furniture, and I do not think even the pleasure of your company, will induce me to alter a custom which I have observed long before you were born." "I am sure Madam," replied Miss Clayton, "if my company were to be the condition of the yellow damask seeing the daylight, I should not have had the temerity to mention it." "I want no one's company" said the angry Lady Maud, "who gallops about the country, in the indecent manner that you do, for all the world like that heathen man Nimrod, you may

may think it very clever, but I think such masculine affectation, very disgusting in a young lady." Miss Clayton crimsoned at the harsh truth, that she had involuntarily subjected herself to hear, and began to wish that she had not provoked it by her flippancy, whilst the goodnatured Lady Bertha, fearing her sister had gone too far, strove to give a different turn to the conversation, by saying, that though it was certainly very dangerous to ride about the country unprotected, yet she thought it pretty enough, to see ladies ambling on little ponies, adding that it was not many years, since she had given up riding a favourite white palfrey herself. The idea of seeing Lady Bertha ambling on her white palfrey, restored the smiles to Miss Clayton's countenance, but she resolved to take a seat at the supper table, quite out of Lady Maud's hearing.

"My dear creature," cried a half naked belle of quality, to Lady Rosamond, "for heaven's

heaven's sake lend me some books: have you any novels? you are I know an immense reader, and therefore you will pity me, when I declare to you that I have not touched a page this fortnight." "I believe," replied Lady Rosamond rather coolly, "my reading, and your Ladyship's, are not exactly similar." "Oh yes, I am sure I shall like your books, I very seldom read one through, just look at what is new, and miss all the rest, for three fourths of them are alike." "Is Lady Louisa Delany turning critic," said Mr. Fletcher, "how must the poor wretches of authors tremble, when they hear of the fiery ordeal through which they will have to pass." "Oh you severe creature," rejoined the lady, "I am sure you mean to laugh at me, do not you think he does?" turning to Henry, who replied very gravely, "He can only then mean to declare himself ignorant of your ladyship's well known information and taste." Lady Laura was delighted, and her vanity prompted

prompted her to regard as true the speeches, which her conscience told her, could only be uttered in ridicule. She resolved however to secure the literary reputation, that she fancied she was acquiring; but unfortunately silence would have befriended her more in her design, than did the torrent of nonsense which she poured forth. "Well I dare say you only want to flatter me, but I confess I am naturally of a retired turn, and perhaps too much addicted to study." "Your Ladyship's merit is then undoubtedly very great," replied Mr. Fletcher, "for in good nature to the follies of the world, you hide your inclinations so admirably, that many would be unjust enough to suppose you highly gratified, by the trifling amusements, which your superior attainments, must in reality teach you to despise." "Oh yes," exclaimed the literary fair one, "as Shakespeare says so charmingly, 'An elegant retirement, books and friends, our chain, our fates, our fortunes and

and our beings blend! oh I am very fond of pretty verses, do not you like poetry?" again addressing herself to Henry, who replied. "Poetry, I adore it! I would never speak in prose, but, from the fear of being singular, poetry is the language of the soul, the vehicle for truth.

"Love I feel thy rapturous pow'r
Thine is all the present hour,
Strong delight tumultuous reigns,
And throbs throughout my bursting veins,
Lo, behold the Cyprian queen!
Mark her soul-subduing mein!
Snatch, oh, snatch me to thy arms
The willing votary of thy charms!
Let me feast without controul
And breathe in rapture all my soul!"

"Oh you naughty man, I must not hear you talk such nonsense," cried the fasionable Lady Laura, at the same time tapping him with her fan, and looking down, after vainly endeavouring to blush; she then assumed a tender embarrassed air, but unfortunately it was lost on Lord Courtney, who had already turned from her, to pay his compliments to some other females

females equally fashionable, and well informed with her ladyship. Disappointed by his departure she began to pay Edmund some attention, and as his face and figure were too striking to be slightly passed over, she inquired of Lady Rosamond in an audible whisper, who he was, and when her curiosity in that particular was gratified, she in a whisper yet more audible, exclaimed. "He is a very handsome fellow, what prodigious fine eyes!" Shall we acknowledge, that even the lords of the creation are not entirely exempt from the failing yclep'd vanity, of which they so liberally accuse the weaker vessels? shall we acknowledge that this failing in Edmund was gratified for the moment, even by a compliment paid with so little delicacy, and by so frivolous an object? Alas! we must unwillingly confess it, and if our male readers be mortified by the discovery, they must blame human nature, and not its humble delineators. Though Edmund undoubtedly felt a temporary

porary sensation of pleasure, yet he blushed at having it excited by one of whose abilities, and even delicacy, he had not conceived a high opinion from the conversation, in which he had overheard her engaged. The blush however was not unnoticed by the lady, who drew her own conclusions from it, and resolved to try the utmost strength of her charms, on the unexperienced heart of the young foreigner. She commenced the attack, by requesting him to help her to some sweetmeats, and the difficulty of fixing her choice, and her whimsical rejection or acceptance of them, introduced all the trifling, which in genteel society is considered ready conversation; and all the pert gaiety which is mistaken for wit. However she contrived to keep him by her, until the dancing was resumed, and then as he was an entire stranger to the major part of the ladies, he thought that he could not do better, than request the honor of her hand.

Dancing

Dancing was her ladyship's forte, in which she certainly excelled; and as she possesed all the refined arts, and studied allurements, which a vain female, stimulated by the desire of conquest, easily acquires, Edmund began to think her elegant and agreeable, and as to her foolish conversation with Lord Courtney, perhaps it was customary to talk nonsense at meetings like the present, at least he had overheard so much from different parties, that hers was by no means singular.

With these ideas, he began to feel rather flattered by her ladyship's excessive attention. The dance being finished, they retired to the bottom of the room, as that part was the coolest and the least crowded. She gave him her fan and gloves to hold, whilst she adjusted a locket, which always came loose on these occasions; and Edmund in gallantry, could not but admire her fine hands, though they were neither so small, nor so white

white as Lady Emma's. The comparison altogether was certainly not advantageous to Lady Laura, but she soon roused him from the study into which it had thrown him, by asking a thousand questions about his friends, with an air of obliging interest, that could not fail to gratify him, accompanying her inquiries with an earnest survey of his countenance, yet looking down with a well-feigned confusion every time that her eyes met his; then she was silent for a few moments; forgot what she was going to say, and laughed at her own embarrassment. To Edmund all this was new, he had never seen coquetry before, and to whom, does it on a first acquaintance appear in its true colour?

On standing up again, they were near Lady Emma, whom Edmund addressed with his usual attention, but she answered him coldly, and the lively colour which rose in her cheeks on the slightest emotion, almost assumed the crimson hue of anger.

anger. She turned from him to conceal it, and he redoubled his attentions to Lady Laura, to hide his mortification.

The evening concluded to the satisfaction of all parties. Even Lady Maud condescended to say that there had been much innocent cheerfulness, and that if all the gaieties of the present day were conducted in as orderly a manner, she should not so often condemn them. Lady Bertha was enchanted with any appearance of shew and gallantry, of which in her youth she had been passionately fond, and Lady Harriett Parkhurst was delighted with so charming a *debut* into her guardian's residence; particularly as she had met an old friend in Miss Dunderton, with whom she had been two years at a fashionable boarding-school. The young ladies renewed their professions of attachment; Miss Dunderton informed Lady Harriett that her papa was made a lord, and in return had the pleasure of hearing that her friend

was to remain at Castle Drelincourt, and that she should therefore have the satisfaction of seeing her frequently; nor perhaps was Lord Courtney entirely left out of the scheme of felicity. They then criticised the ladies dresses, and informed each other what their partners said to them, and with whom they should like to have danced.

As for Lord and Lady Dunderton the acquitted themselves so well, as to make the Earl declare that when their stiffness and embarrassment should be worn off, and a little attention and politeness acquired, they would not be very exceptionable in their behaviour, and that in a couple of centuries the family might begin to be respectable. Mr Dunderton terrified with the reports of Lord Drelincourt's hauteur, had contented himself by making a bow in the crowd, *en passant*, and escaping without further notice, declared to his papa and mamma on their return home, that the world might call the Earl proud, but for his part he

he thought him very affable and polite. "Yes, yes," said my Lord, "I saw nothing but to like in all of them, and now we've broken the ice however, and we'll keep it open, we must always pretend to give up to his ancient family, and all that, and it will be a good thing to get to know people's titles and how to behave one's self, for I declare I feel quite dashed, to think of making so many new acquaintance at my time of life, but Sophia may catch that young Lord Courtney, he's a spirited young fellow, I like his looks, and I'm sure he cannot see better cloaths on any body's back than she wears."

Miss promised to do every thing papa wished, and her brother said he should have no objection to Lady Maria, but he must own he was frightened of Lady Rosamond. His father, however, soon silenced him, by saying he would have neither, for that poor ladies of quality were useless expensive articles, laying dead without any interest, and that it was well

well known Lord Drelincourt lived up to his income, and his estate being all entailed on his son, he supposed the daughters might go whistle for what they would have," with this elegant illustration Lord Dunderton dismissed his family to bed, and we will have the humanity to give our, perhaps, yet more wearied readers, a temporary rest from the labour of perusing these pages.

CHAP. V.

" Here freedom reign'd without the least alloy,
Nor gossip's tale nor ancient maiden's gall;
Nor saintly spleen didst murmur at our joy,
And with envenom'd tongue our pleasures pall;
And why? There was but one great rule for all,
To wit, that each should work his own desire,
And eat, drink, study, sleep, as it may fall,
Or melt the time in love, or wake the lyre,
And carol what unbid, the muses might inspire.

THOMPSON.

WHEN Edmund entered the breakfast room the next morning, he found so large a party assembled there, that he began to think the revels of the preceding evening were to be continued through the next day.

Lady Harriett Parkhurst was of course now considered as an inmate; Lady Maud and Lady Bertha had been prevailed on to emerge from the retirement of Courtney Lodge, in compliment to their beloved

loved nephew's return; and the family circle had received the addition of Captain Clayton, who was the acknowledged lover of Lady Rosamond; Miss Clayton, his sister; Mr. Fletcher, who was a frequent and valued guest; and a Mr. Bresford, a young man of remarkably gentle manners, who paid his addresses to Lady Maria.

The Earl's hospitality and benevolence were gratified, by seeing so large an assemblage round him, and he gaily declared, that he would challenge the country to produce a finer breakfast scene. After it was over, the whole party were requested to consult only their own inclinations in the disposal of their time until five o'clock, which was the dinner hour.

Miss Clayton said that she should visit the stables, as she always saw her favorite Highflyer dressed over before she rode out. Lady Maud lifted up her hands and eyes in silence! The elder ladies retired

to the working-room, the younger to music, and the gentlemen to the library, with the exception of Mr. Breresford, who followed the young ladies, to whom he could be useful in a thousand ways, as he could turn over the leaves of their music books, excelled in winding silks, was unequalled for skill in varnishing, and was extremely expert in making flowers.

The gentlemen passed two or three hours very agreeably in the library, which presented to them learning in its most pleasing forms; the room was splendidly fitted up with busts of eminent authors, ancient and modern, whose works were all to be found in the noble collection of books, which the Earl's taste and love of reading encreased every year. Science had here every aid, and study every advantage; the windows looked only towards the thickest part of the wood, and a waterfall sometimes dashed over a rocky bed with noisy velocity, and sometimes dropped at regular intervals, or softly murmured

murmured in a gentle stream. Over the door of this elegant retreat, Lord Drelincourt had placed the celebrated Cardan's motto, " Tempus ager meus." * It was indeed an estate of which he knew the inestimable value, and which he cultivated with unwearied assiduity. Captain Clayton, unlike the generality of military men, appeared in his element in this place, where most of his brethren would have felt very awkwardly situated. This gentleman had a pale, clear complexion, fine teeth, animated hazle eyes, and an aquiline nose, particularly calculated to express contempt, to the language of which it appeared to be accustomed; his countenance was interesting, although there was in it an air of discontent, and an expression of melancholy almost amounting to peevishness, which rendered it unpleasing to the superficial observer; but when animated by the happy elucidation

* Time is my estate.

of a subject, the discussion of a favorite topic, or the starting of some new idea, the fire of genius shone in his eyes, the glow of ardour suffused his pale complexion, and every turn of his countenance bespoke the emotions of no common mind. He soon discovered an intimate acquaintance with the ancients, joined to a minute knowledge of the moderns; and unfolded the stores of a cultivated mind, with an amiable readiness, equally removed from the arrogant presumption of knowing more than the rest of the company, or the contemptible littleness which fears the discovery of not knowing so much. He spoke with fluency, and listened with attention; in short, he gained the admiration of all, particularly of Edmund, who had before only remarked the frigid gloom of his reserved manners.

To dissipate the stupor which is sometimes created by fixing the attention too long on any subject, the gentlemen ordered

dered their horses, highly to the gratification of Miss Clayton, who called them good fellows, and told them that she would ride a match with any of them, as a reward for their kindness in leaving the fusty ancients and foolish moderns. The other young ladies were soon prevailed on to join the party, and Captain Clayton drove Lady Rosamond in his curricle; Mr. Breresford wished Lady Maria would allow him the honour of her company in his gig; but she was dying in a nervous head-ache, and could only trust herself in a close carriage. Unfortunately Miss Clayton overheard the request, and offered to supply her place; this was far from being Mr. Breresford's wish, he knew the Phæton-like spirit of the young lady, and it would be no consolation to him, if he were thrown out by her madness, that she would in all probability fall with him. But unhappily the same timidity which inspired his present fears, prevented his ever offering an argument or opinion, in

contradiction to any that might be advanced. However, though the monosyllable, no, was rarely pronounced by him, yet, on this occasion, he endeavoured to hint an unwillingness to consent; he therefore hesitatingly replied, that he knew Miss Clayton preferred being on horseback, to the confinemeut of any carriage, and that he would make interest for a place with the ladies. "Oh, lord!" exclaimed the Amazonian lady, "trust me I should not, through politeness, have offered to let you drive me; no, indeed, but my poor devil has hurt his off-foot, or wants a shoe, for he limps like a wooden-legged beggar this morning. I must send him immediately to a good farrier, one of the veterinary professed; for I had rather hop for a month on one leg myself, than have any thing happen to my Highflyer; so come, order your chariot, aud your fiery footed steed, and we shall soon shew them how to drive, and leave the country behind us in style."

style." Poor Breresford trembled, and impelled by his fears, which every moment gained strength, he entreated to be allowed a place with Lady Maria. Miss Clayton cruelly persisted that the parties were all arranged, appealed to his politeness, ridiculed his scruples, laughed at his fears, and at last gained her point. The trembling beau was constrained to help her into his gig, to seat himself by her side, and to take the reins into his unsteady hands, resolving inwardly, that no entreaties should induce him to trust them into those of his companion. For some time all went on well, the gig sought protection alternately from the curricle and the carriage. Mr. Breresford affected to sustain an easy conversation with each party, hoping by that means to be able to continue his gentle pace, and quiet mode of driving; but this was by no means Miss Clayton's intention, she soon urged him to pass the other carriages, on pretence that his horse was uneasy from

keeping so near them. Mr. Breresford replied, that the horse was perfectly gentle, and used to remaining by the side of a carriage, as it was the way that he always preferred. "I dare say you may," replied his spirited companion; "but I do not, and you surely will not refuse to change your way for mine." He urged that the road was too narrow where they were; this was just what Miss Clayton desired, "Give me the reins," said she, coolly, "I will engage to pass with the greatest ease." Resistance was useless, he therefore resigned them, but resolved to resume them as soon as the danger was passed. The fair charioteer surmounted every difficulty, and having once gotten a-head, as she nautically expressed herself, she turned to wave her hand to the rest of the party, and told them that they would not long in sight; after which salutation she stood up to flog the animal, and he being a mettlesome steed, set off at a rate, which in a few minutes justified her prediction.

diction. Poor Mr. Breresford could only repeat, "Nay, now Miss Clayton; indeed, now Miss Clayton, we go too fast." She laughed and flogged; and Henry urged Edmund to ride after them, that they might witness the event; which they were soon enabled to do, for coming to a narrow bridge, Mr. Breresford's fears operated so violently, that he imprudently made a desperate effort to recover the guidance of the horse, by endeavouring to catch the reins out of Miss Clayton's hand; she however kept firm possession of one rein, he pulled at the other; whilst the horse, not knowing which to obey, wisely followed his own inclinations, and set off at full speed. At that instant, one of the swinish multitude happened to be crossing the road, and frightened at its danger, ran first to the right, then back to the left, and then, with the stupidity which is the characteristic of its race, directly between the legs of the high spirited steed, who indignantly took

a leap, which threw the lady out on one side of the gig, and the gentleman on the other. Nor was this the only bad consequence; a lady was riding at a little distance, attended by a servant, her horse took fright, she screamed, the animal followed the example of setting off, and the servant in vain endeavoured to rescue his mistress, whose situation began to be really alarming. Edmund, spurring on his horse, in a few minutes came up to the lady, and with admirable dexterity, accompanied by no little peril, caught hold of the bridle of her horse, then throwing himself from his own, took her in his arms, and discovered that he had rescued Lady Laura Delany from imminent danger. Terrified and agitated, she burst into tears, whilst she thanked him, and Edmund, giving the horses to her servant, who had come up to them, entreated that she would take a place in the carriage, which was now so near that the ladies within it had witnessed all the alarming

alarming part of the affair. Miss Clayton beheld with great composure the mischief that she had occasioned, and for which she was in some degree punished, by having been thrown into a pool of dirty water; and, as she generally wore leather breeches (or drawers, if the term be more fashionable) under her feminine garments, it made the immersion not altogether convenient. Poor Breresford however almost envied her fall, in comparison with his own, which had been on a heap of stones, and might have proved much more serious, had he not fortunately come safely down on that part called by Hudibrass "the seat of honor!" where contusions may certainly be made with the least danger to the sufferer. However, though not dangerous, the pain was far from being trifling, and in his sense of it, forgetting decorum, he stood ruefully rubbing the part affected, in sight of the whole company, until he was roused to recollection by the horse-laughs of his partner

partner in distress, who exclaimed, "By Jupiter, this is better than all the rest, I did not think when I said we would leave the country behind us, that we should come into such close contact with it." She then offered to drive home more carefully, but this Breresford firmly refused; and it was settled that he should ride Edmund's horse, and Miss Clayton Lady Laura's; though she said a side-saddle was of no consequence, for she could ride on any other just as well, and Breresford had better take it, as the crutch would keep him from falling over his horse's head. He endeavoured in vain to smile; but the pain which he yet felt, gave an expression to his countenance far from cheerful, though it was certainly risible; and he trotted on very gently, maintaining a perfect silence, until, to his inexpressible joy, his tormentor passed him with Lord Courtney in full gallop.

On putting Lady Laura into the carriage, Edmund was struck by the ashy paleness

paleness of Lady Emma's countenance, and eagerly inquired if she were not well. "Oh yes," said Lady Maria answering for her, "she is very well, but she was much frightened when you went to Lady Laura, you know she is quite a child, and has never been used to scenes of this kind." "Might I hope," replied Edmund "that Lady Emma durst trust herself under my protection, the air would revive her, and so precious a charge would certainly make me a careful driver?" This was not to be resisted, the colour returned to her cheeks, in deepened dies, but she hesitated till Lady Maria said with some peevishness, "Pray go, child if you intend it, and do not stay blushing here, whilst I am ready to faint with the heat and bustle we have had." Lady Emma then complied, Edmund felt her hand tremble as she gave it to him to assist her, he could not resist the temptation of pressing it; and we need not tell many of our readers, that there is a manner in

in performing a trifling gallantry of this sort, which speaks volumes.

We have already said that Emma's was a countenance,

"Where the loveliest expression to features is join'd
By nature's most delicate pencil design'd;
Where blushes unbidden, and smiles without art,
Speak the softness and feeling which dwell in the heart."

Her manners possessed a degree of almost infantine simplicity: but there was also an innocent and affectionate gentleness in them, which rendered her a most interesting object, to the lovers of unsophisticated nature; particularly as her mind was too highly cultivated, her imagination too brilliant, and her judgment too correct, to be long hidden from an observing eye, though the veil which timidity threw over them, occasioned her, by superficial observers, to be more remarked for her mild unassuming manners and constant good humour, than her talents, which she carefully concealed from

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the generality of her acquaintance, well knowing that the display of them more frequently gains envy than admiration, creating many enemies, and often alienating even friends; with this disposition she appeared to the most advantage, in proportion as the circle was confined, and never had she been thought by Edmund so charming as in their tête-à-tête. He had always admired her but knew not to what extent until this auspicious morning, when he was flattered by the interest that he had excited, and which she had been unable to conceal; delighted with the new and facinating style of her conversation, equally removed from every thing pedantic or trifling, and amused with the playful wit by which she adorned it, Edmund in gazing on her forgot all the allurements of Lady Laura, and the tender pressure of his hand, with which she had honoured him in her fright; but he felt grateful to the lucky accident, that had placed him in the situation so favourable

favourable to his wishes, and he took care to express his sense of it to his fair companion, who answered with truth, that she had suffered too much alarm to feel any obligation to the cause, though it had ultimately produced the good of removing her into an open carriage, which she always preferred. Edmund asked if he might have the gratification of thinking that any portion of her fears were for his safety, or if it was Lady Laura's that engrossed them entirely, "Neither," replied the blushing Emma, "for to acknowledge the truth, I thought my brother had gone to her assistance, and therefore it was for him that I felt afraid." "Then," returned Edmund in a tone of mortification and disappointment, "my emotions were misplaced, they arose from the hope of your being interested for me, and they were exquisite." "Do you think then, that I could be uninterested when you were in danger?" she asked in the softest accents, but conscious that the

the tone of her voice, expressed more even than her words, she endeavoured to qualify them by adding with a smile "though you certainly could not expect me to feel the same for you as for my brother." She had raised her eyes timidly to Edmund's, but something that she read there, impelled her to cast them down, and crimsoned her face with blushes, whilst he exclaimed with a mixture of tenderness and vivacity, "Indeed, my dear Lady Emma you are right, I do not wish you to feel for me as for a brother, and allow me to assure you that I shall never feel for you as for a sister; though your sisters will be always dear to me as my own." He looked earnestly at her, he read in her countenance, the faithful index of her thoughts, that she understood him, he was emboldened to drop her title, the wearisome repetition was displeasing to the ears of love, he called her, "Emma," she blushed more deeply, a smile played on her countenance, but

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it seemed restrained by the novelty of her sensations, they were mixed and indefinable; Edmund saw her embarrassment, he alternately feared and hoped, he repeated, "Emma, my Emma," the pronoun had a wonderful effect on the ears of her to whom it was applied. She looked up; tears started into her eyes, and a sigh, the sure unerring herald of love, escaped from her agitated heart, the delighted Edmund re-echoed it; and then, readers! a total silence ensued, neither wished to break it, yet both were sorry when they arrived at the lodge of the castle.

CHAP. VI.

In our own strength unhappily secure,
Too little cautious of the adverse power,
And by the blast of self-opinion mov'd,
We wish to please, and seek to be belov'd;
On pleasure's flow'ry brink we idly stray,
Masters as yet of our returning way;
Seeing no danger we disarm our mind,
And give our conduct to the waves and wind,
Then in the flow'ry mead or verdant shade,
To wanton dalliance negligently laid,
We weave the chaplet and we crown the bowl,
And smiling see the nearer waters roll,
Till swift into the boundless ocean borne,
Our foolish confidence, too late we mourn.

PRIOR.

THE accident on the road had delayed the parties so much, that they had barely time to change their equestrian dresses before the dinner-bell rang. Lady Laura not having any toilet duties to perform, contrived to see Edmund for a few minutes alone; she again thanked him for his interference, which had in all probability

probability saved her life, adding that her family would make a point of expressing their obligations, which her emotions prevented her from doing as she wished. She sighed, trembled, and had intended to faint, but Edmund's heart had been too lately interested, for his senses to be subdued by her allurements; from the same circumstance however, he replied to her in a tone of such involuntary tenderness, and with so much insinuating softness of manner, that he very unintentionally completed his conquest over her Ladyship, even at a moment when every thought was directed to the lovely companion of his ride: but his eyes beamed love, his countenance was animated with hope, and Lady Laura could not distrust such favourable omens, for that they should be inspired by Lady Emma, a mere child, ignorant of art, and who could neither disguise nor assume, was an idea too improbable to be entertained for a moment.

At dinner, of course, all the conversation

tion consisted of comments on the adventures of the morning; poor Breresford felt a little awkward; Lady Maria mortified at the ridiculous figure he had made, and contrasting it in her own mind, with the spirited conduct displayed by Edmund, could not eat, and retired from the table to take possession of a sofa, where she reclined in a state of langour, less affected than usual. Miss Clayton told Breresford that he had better lay down likewise, as she thought his nerves had not yet recovered their tone. Lady Bertha said that Edmund had performed a very gallant achievement, which ought to be rewarded, by an embroidered scarf, or some similar trophy of Lady Laura's gratitude. "My gratitude, Madam," replied Lady Laura, "can never be expressed so warmly as it will always be felt; I can only say that whatever proof of it Count Rodalvi, may require, I shall be happy to give." Edmund bowed, Lady Rosamond smiled disdainfully, Emma blushed, and Lady Harriett instinctively

instinctively looked towards her guardian, "Humph," exclaimed Lady Maud, "saying sadly too much, I think. In my time, a young lady would not have run the risk, of laying herself under obligations, which required such unlimited returns." "Oh, you happy fellow," exclaimed Lord Courtney, "make me your deputy, let me claim your reward." Edmund smiled, and told him that he should receive an embroidered scarf, as proposed by Lady Bertha, but on express condition of wearing it. "Granted," he exclaimed, "I will wrap myself in it as a safe-guard from the wickedness of the times; it shall act as a charm against the allurements of vice; and Lady Laura shall embroider upon it the Choice of Hercules." Lady Bertha thought it would look very pretty, and offered to teach Lady Laura the stitch in which, when she was young, she had worked a set of chairs with scriptural histories.

Lady Laura Delany was the only daughter

ter of the Earl of Carisbrooke. Her father doated on her with mistaken fondness, and made her will a law, to which all around her were required implicitly to submit. Haughty, trifling, and vain, she was not satisfied with admiration, but wished to inspire every one with a real passion: unfortunately her means were not equal to her wishes: the accomplishments so much valued in the present day, she had been too indolent to acquire; and her beauty was by no means so striking as to preclude the necessity of other aids. In this dilemma, she studied the art of charming, till she reduced it to a complete science. She had a regular succession of manœuvres, which she played off to all on whom she had designs, and by repeated practice she became so skilful in seeing her advantages, and seizing them at the precise moment of success, that her attempts were generally crowned with victory. Unfortunately, her arts had not been sufficiently powerful to entangle

any of her lovers in the snares of matrimony; for though the men swore she was divine, yet if marriage were hinted at, a mysterious shrug or an ungenerous smile, which conveyed every thing without saying any thing, generally closed the subject.

Disgusted by the duplicity of her admirers, which Lady Laura was too penetrating not to see, she eagerly embraced the idea of trying her influence on Edmund, whose figure and manners were too interesting to pass unobserved by her, and whose youth, candor, and evident ignorance of the artificial manners of polished society, gave every hope of success, The fortunate incident of her rescue by him, she regarded as a most favorable omen, and resolving not to lose any advantage by delay, the very next morning brought an elegant card from the Earl of Carisbrooke, expressive of his acknowledgements, and requesting Edmund to add to the obligations which he had

had already laid him under, by favoring him with his company at dinner *en famille*, adding, that nothing but close imprisonment from the gout should have induced him to behave with so little ceremony, and that he hoped his impatience to see the deliverer of his child, would plead his excuse for so abrupt an introduction of himself. "Bravo!" exclaimed Henry, "this is the work of the enchantress: you must go, Edmund, to the palace of Armida; you will find it a magic scene; and then the *boudoir!* oh! the delight of being with a pretty woman in her *boudoir!*

"J'aime une boudoir étroite, qu'un demi jour eclaire,
Là mon cœur est chez lui; le premier demi jour,
Fuit par la volupté. menagé par l'amour."

Emma crimsoned, for she knew Lady Laura, and feared that her lover's fidelity was going to be severely tried. Edmund read her thoughts in her countenance, and felt no wish to court temptation. "What shall I do, my lord?" said he to Lord Drelincourt, with a smile. "Do," he replied,

plied, returning the smile, " can their be a doubt? Accept the invitation; you will find the Earl a very pleasant man, and if my good opinion of him will prejudice you in his favor, I will add that he is an old friend of mine, and I know not where I could find one much more worthy." " That is quite sufficient, my lord," said Edmund bowing, " for me to esteem him; and I already regret the time which must elapse before I have the pleasure of his acquaintance." " I dare say you do," said Henry, " you are a happy fellow." Then turning to Lady Harriett, with an affected tenderness, he continued in a half whisper, " But happiness will not be confined to Carisbrooke Castle, any more than talents and beauty, at least I shall not be envious of any there." Lady Harriett was much pleased with this address, the only gallant one that she had heard from Henry since the ball, and she resolved first to inform Miss Dunderton of it, secondly, to be violently in love, and

and thirdly, she wondered which of her talents he admired the most, and endeavoured to recollect when she had displayed any. The morning passed as usual; Miss Clayton teased Breresford to take some lessons from her, how to jump out of the back part of an open carriage, in case of an accident, but he resolutely refused, and took shelter on the sofa with Lady Maria, for whom he employed himself very assiduously, in ornamenting a work-box with some beautiful designs of his own painting.

At length the hour which brought Edmund to Carisbrooke Castle, arrived, and he was received with much politeness by the Earl, who was a venerable figure, apparently near seventy, his feet were raised on cushions, which Lady Laura was placing with filial duty, when Edmund entered. She merely introduced him to her father, and then withdrew, leaving him impressed with an idea, that she, was certainly amiable at home, and might pro-

bably appear to much advantage in a domestic circle. The gentlemen were soon mutually pleased, Lord Carisbrooke's manners had an engaging frankness, he was charmed with the ingenuousness and modesty of his young guest, and before dinner was announced, they had quite forgotten the shortness of their acquaintance. Lady Laura acquitted herself with much ease, and elegance, in doing the honours of the table, and shortly after dinner, the Earl requesting Edmund to excuse the methodical idleness of an invalid, prepared to take his accustomed nap, deputing his daughter to entertain his guest. She soon led the way from the dining room, but not to the *boudoir*, of which Henry had given so captivating an account; no, that was reserved for the season when the blaze of the fire added to its contracted size, would give an idea of cheerfulness and social comfort. She now asked Edmund to stroll through the grounds, which were laid out with much taste;

taste; in the course of their walk, her ladyship appeared fatigued, Edmund of course entreated her to accept of his arm, and she was not accustomed to raise scruples; their way led to a beautiful summer house, which they entered for the double purpose of resting themselves, and of enjoying the fine prospect that it commanded. It was built on a small eminence, shaded by wood, and consisted of two rooms, the first was nearly filled with choice exotics, which wafted a delightful fragrance, and excluded the fervor of the sun so efectually, that even at noon it was involved in gloom, which cast an air of pleasing mystery over the place. The inner room was tastefully fitted up with pale pink furniture; a few fine prints, a small collection of books, and a number of pleasing trifles, seemed to consecrate the scene to meditation and friendship: none but pleasing ideas could be inspired by its solitary situation, and bounded view; for it overlooked only a

pretty valley, thro' which a brook murmured in pensive melody, and seemed to tell all who entered it, that they must depend only on themselves for happiness; Edmund was delighted, and his heart felt all its sensibility called forth in a scene so congenial to his feelings. One moment he wished for Lady Emma, and the next was contented with Lady Laura; they fell into a train of agreeable conversation, and time flew unperceived by Edmund, until his companion reminded him, that her father's nap would be finished; rightly judging that it was much better for him to leave the enchanting spot with a wish to return, than to stay till the charm of novelty, and fervour of a first impression had exhausted themselves.

They found the Earl awake and refreshed; coffee was brought in, the conversation became general, and so agreeable, that Edmund was sorry when the hour of his departure approached.

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The Earl pressed him to repeat his visit, and Lady Laura added her intreaties, exulting in the conquest which she flattered herself she should soon obtain.

CHAP. VII.

Such dire achievements sings the bard that tells
Of palfrey'd dames, bold knights, and magic spells,
Where whole brigades one champion's arms o'erthrow,
And cleave a giant at a random blow;
Slay paynims vile, that force the fair, and tame
The goblin's fury, and the dragon's flame.

TICKELL.

THE next day was to restore the ladies Maud and Bertha to Courtney Lodge, and all the party was invited to escort them there.

The expedition was fixed for an early hour, in order that the young people might explore some curious rocks and caverns in the neighbourhood. When they arrived at the Lodge, they found an elegant repast, and were waited on by children, dressed in all the fantastic disguises, which Lady Bertha (for it was under

under her direction,) had met with in her various reading. Henry made *les grands yeux* at the little cupid, who brought him a glass of wine, but turning away to conceal his smiles, he saw a girl in the character of Fame, waiting on his father; his sisters were attended by Prudence, Fortitude, and Chastity, and the table was covered with mottoes, devices, figures and allegories. The inventress of the feast, enjoyed the surprise that it occasioned, and looking round with a smile, the benevolence of which, hid the folly of the speech that it preceeded. "I am fond of any thing ingenious," said the good lady, "and I own, I must regret that allegorical feasts and masques, have gone out of fashion since the reign of that noble Queen Elizabeth. Hers were happy days, she could see the value and beauty of chivalry, nor did she think it beneath her learning and virtue to encourage it." This was a subject on which Lady Bertha could be eloquent, for she was deeply

read in court intrigues and spectacles, and could repeat most exactly, the number and the order of the horsemen that attended on this occasion, and the pages and the ladies who were chosen for the other, but Lady Maud interrupted her, by saying with a sour aspect. "I do not know in what Elizabeth's virtue could consist, I have no opinion of any woman's virtue, who acknowledges male favorites, and I cannot admire days, when ladies admitted men into their rooms, as if they were lapdogs." "It would be certainly dangerous in times like these, my lady," said Captain Clayton, "when mankind have degenerated from their native simplicity, and hardy virtue, but in the more fortunate periods to which you allude, we are told, that all the men were brave, and all the women chaste." "Things so incomprehensible to us, at this distance of time," added Mr. Fletcher, "that we only consider the assertion in the same light, as we treat that of there being in former

former days, flying dragons, men who carried their heads under their arms, and beasts that assumed the appearance of beautiful women, to lure their prey to destruction." "Oh but indeed," said Lady Bertha warmly, "Virtue was not imaginary in those days, for all the romances of the times abound in the noblest sentiments; and we even read of an illustrious and valorous knight, who being thrown into unheard of difficulties, and vanquishing them in the most wonderful manner, is brought to a splendid castle, where he is treated with the utmost respect; a sumptuous banquet is prepared for him, and after being attended by females to the bath, he is led to table, and waited on by naked damsels of the most striking beauty; and all this is mentioned without any levity; nor does the relation of it appear inconsistent with the most rigid virtue; a strong proof of the purity of the times in which they were written." "Certainly, my dear aunt," said Henry, "and at the same time, of the brilliancy of the author's imagination

imagination. I am only sorry that you stopped short of the models which you so much admire." This sally created general laughter, and Lord Drelincourt took the opportunity of entering into a discussion on the progress of romance, and the different style of writing which had been adopted in different ages. The conversation became interesting, for it was a subject in which all the females could join, except Miss Clayton, who had never read a page in her life; and Lady Harriett, who was however rejoiced to hear that the world contained folio romances, with the delightful titles of "Cassandra," "Cleopatra, or Love's Master-piece," "Cyrus the Great," and many others which she resolved to procure, as she began to think that it was the fashion to read at Castle Drelincourt.

The collation being over, and all the attendant loves and graces withdrawn, Miss Clayton reminded the party, that if they delayed their excursion much longer, they

they should inevitably be lost in the wilderness which they meant to explore; they accordingly mounted; but Fate had ordained that poor Breresford should not appear to advantage in equestrian excursions; and, on this occasion, she was particularly cruel in her decree. His old enemy, Miss Clayton, provoked at the coldness with which he had treated her since the day of his precipitate descent from his car, resolved to punish him, by making him once more the slave of fear, and a laughing-stock to the company; she accordingly clapped her spur (for she never rode without one) into her horse, and setting off full gallop, contrived, in passing Breresford, to exercise her whip on his steed as she passed him; the animal, smarting from the lash, set off likewise, and his master not having perceived it, and being taken quite unawares, was hurried into the thickest part of the wood before he was fully sensible of his situation. As for Miss Clayton, she struck into

into a different path, by which she rejoined the party, to describe when her bursts of laughter permitted utterance, the forlorn situation of their affrighted beau. Lady Maria was not much gratified by having her lover held up as an object of ridicule, for he possessed many amiable qualities, though they were veiled under the effeminate habits, which he had contracted by being brought up in the most retired and domestic manner with a grandmother, who doated on him, and whose death, which had taken place a few months before the time we are treating of, he had mourned with sincere regret, though he had not, like some of the poets of this poetical age, expressed the extent of his affliction by writing a folio volume of sonnets to her memory. At this moment all his best traits recurred to Lady Maria; her vanity was hurt as much as her affection, and she expressed very keenly her disapprobation of Miss Clayton's love of the ridiculous, adding, "It is surprising, that

that in your constant search after it, you forget to look where you might find the most ample food for your inclination to expose it, and where you might indulge that inclination to the utmost, not only with peculiar success, but without incurring any censure for using too great severity." The satire of this speech, only shewed Miss Clayton's power of teasing in another light. She asked pardon with the most provoking humility, protesting that had she considered the danger of her frolic, she would not for the world have indulged in it, for that she had heard of people who had lost their senses from severe fright; adding, "how happy it would be if the proverb, that, "what we never have we never can lose," applied in the least to him; for how could I answer to the world were I to deprive it of the talents, and manly virtues of a Mr. Breresford. We must endeavour to make Lady Bertha believe that a malicious enchanter has flown away with him, or

transformed

transformed him into a monkey; but I will repair the mischief I have done, to the utmost in my power; I will seek for him, and bring him in triumphant safety on my horse's neck; I am sorry I have not a pillow ready for him, but it is only 'when the mind's at ease the body's delicate;' and I dare say his mind is such a chaos just now, that he will not care how his body is conveyed, if it be but in a whole skin." So saying, she set off in pursuit of the involuntary fugitive, regardless of the coldness and gravity of the company, who felt offended by her freedom, and disgusted by her manners. Her search however was vain; her hallooes through the wood were unanswered, and she began to be seriously alarmed for the consequences of her frolic. After continuing her pursuit, and reiterating her shouts for some time, she returned to give an account of her bad success, and related it with a countenance, in which concern was so strongly marked, that her previous

previous conduct was forgotten, and the more readily on account of her brother, who always witnessed with pain his sister's excentricities.

Lest however our readers should suffer from their fears for the safety of Mr. Breresford, we must inform them of his proceedings. He gallopped very furiously, though very unwillingly, nearly two miles, and was alternately in bodily fear for his head, which was threatened with destruction from the huge boughs under which he was rapidly carried, and in bodily pain from the violent and repeated percussions which his head's antipodes suffered, by coming suddenly in contact with the saddle, particularly as he had not yet recovered from the bruises he had received in his recent fall. However there was no remedy, the underwood pricked the horse's legs, and retarded his progress, and in order to make up for the lost time, he redoubled his speed when he found himself free from

obstacles,

obstacles. Thus alternately lifted up in the air, and brought down again with additional force, sometimes stumbling and sometimes leaping, the affrighted horse carried his yet more affrighted master over brake and bog, hill and dale, hedge and ditch, of which even our most dashing fox-hunters would not have liked the prospect. Breresford called loudly two or three times for help, but his steed seemed to disdain the idea of assistance, and flew with increased speed to shew that he required none. Breresford then pulled the reins with all his strength, but by that means made the beast rear, until his master thought, like Don Quixote, that he was going to fly into the air. An expedition of this kind, however, he was by no means inclined to risk, as the first step towards it had produced on his susceptible stomach, all the agreeable sensations which the motion of a boat in a rough sea gives to a fresh-water sailor: making therefore a virtue of necessity, he, at length

length, threw his arms lovingly round his horses neck, and resigning himself to his destiny, suffered the animal to choose his road. The sagacious steed wisely took the way home, and brought his master in safety to the gates of the lodge. Breresford began to breathe more freely when he felt himself on terra-firma; and, in gratitude for his escape, he strove to forget the mortifying circumstances by which it had been preceded.

He found the elderly party at cards; and, after having accounted with great good nature for his return, he had the pleasure of sitting by the table three long hours, hearing Lady Maud complain of her own bad cards, and her partner's bad play; that she never had a hand, or if she ventured one was basted, and had lost two voles with mattadores. At length the party returned, and were very glad to find the object of their solicitude in safety, and apparent ease. Henry could not forbear laughing, as he enquired how

Mr.

Mr. Breresford liked the woods and dales; if he had taken sketches of the most striking views, as he had proposed; and what he thought to the picturesque appearance of the whole. Breresford bore the laugh with great good humour, saying, that if to inspire terror were one great effect of the sublime, the scenes through which he had passed were, doubtless, entitled to that epithet; but, that he hoped his short stay amongst them would excuse his not having described them with his pencil according to his original intention. "And yet," said Mr. Fletcher, "we do not find flying through a country, any impediment to describing it, in this ingenious age; formerly, indeed, men of talents and information used to spend twenty years in travelling, and then apologize for any imperfection in their accounts, by stating the difficulty of arriving at facts; but now, a tour for a couple of summer months, is quite sufficient for an elaborate account of the places through which

which it is made; particularly if illustrated by sketches taken, of course upon the spot, aud no doubt equally faithful with the descriptions which accompany them. So wise are our present travellers; and wiser still is he who travels by his own fire-side, and with a map, a volume or two of good old authors, and quotations from fashionable moderns, and the poets, can make as entertaining a tour as the best of them."

CHAP. VIII.

Oh, Happiness! our being's end and aim,
Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content, whate'er thy name,
That something still that prompts th'eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live and dare to die,
Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,
O'erlook'd, seen double by the fool and wise;
Plant of celestial seed, if dropt below,
Say in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow.

POPE

FOR some time, affairs went on in an uniform train at Castle Drelincourt; Miss Clayton did not continue her jokes further than she could expect them to be born, Henry made violent love to Lady Harriett, merely *pour passer le tems*, and Edmund every day gained ground on Lady Laura's esteem, and lost it in his own; half his time was spent at Carisbrooke Castle; every evening he resolved to go there no more, and every morning

ing he resolved to go once again for the last time.

Lady Emma was unhappy, but she saw that Edmund was likewise, and she carefully avoided a look, or word, which he might construe into a reproach: nor were they alone melancholy; Captain Clayton's dejection increased, Edmund perceived it, and anxiously wished to enquire its cause, for he had conceived a regard for him, which was returned by the Captain with the utmost friendship. But it was a subject too delicate to be introduced unless by accident, and Edmund was therefore left to conjecture. Sometimes he thought the eccentricity of Miss Clayton might give her brother uneasiness, but Clayton's mind was too strong to sink under the follies of others, and becoming accustomed to his sister's they ceased to mortify him, nor did he throw away upon them remonstrances which experience had taught him were unavailing.

The next idea that presented itself, and apparently a more plausible one, was, that he felt hurt by the treatment which he received from the fair goddess of his idolatry, for Lady Rosamond, in common with many other ladies, was fond of exerting her power, and thought that the sure way to try a man's affection, was to treat him alternately as a slave and a fool. Having received every tender avowal from her lover, and her vanity having been gratified by every compliment and praise which partial affection could bestow, she tried all the variety of caprice to rivet more firmly, chains, which however strong, ought never to be felt. She assumed a cold and haughty air to wound his pride, a reserved and dejected one to mortify his love; she was gay when she thought being so would rouse his jealousy, indifferent and careless, when she saw that by such conduct she depressed his hope of pleasing. In short, she was alternately a tyrant and a spoiled child, and he was alternately

ternately disgusted by her conduct, and charmed with her fine sense and brilliant accomplishments.

Accident, however, freed him from a slavery, which became irksome, and deprived Lady Rosamond of a lover whom she treated unworthily.

One morning, the Earl, Lord Courtney and Mr. Fletcher, were obliged to attend a public meeting in the neighbourhood, Edmund and Clayton were therefore left to themselves, for Breresford was so entirely a lady's man, that he was no acquisition to the gentlemen. The morning was uncommonly rainy, consequently there was no other resource than the library. The ladies were in the gallery, and as Clayton's melancholy seemed even greater than usual, Edmund resolved to make him the confidant of his own vexations, and to request to share his in return.

Unfortunately, at the instant that they left the gallery, Lady Rosamond did the same, and took her seat behind a screen,

in the room which we have already mentioned, as being appropriated to the ladies' work, and which communicated by one door with the library. She had retired here to finish a large drawing, meant as a present for her lover, to whom she was much attached, notwithstanding the absurdity of her conduct towards him. The subject was from Mrs. Radcliff's "Italian," and represented the interesting scene of Ellena's midnight marriage, on which beautiful incident, Clayton had, in reading this admirable work, dwelt with peculiar pleasure, particularly remarking that it would afford an admirable subject for the pencil. Lady Rosamond was so intent on her employment, that she had not observed that the door of the library was open, until she heard Clayton's voice; she then retained her seat, not from any wish to hear the conversation which might pass, for that was an idea altogether unworthy of her, and one which she would have blushed to entertain for a moment,

but

but she was prompted by a too scrupulous delicacy, thinking that if she discovered her retreat, it might be construed into desiring a tête-à-tête with her lover; she therefore continued her drawing in silence, and as the gentlemen had only, the instant before, left the whole party in the gallery, they of course concluded themselves entirely in private, particularly as no one could enter the work-room unseen, on account of the door being open; and thus they were betrayed by the very circumstance which contributed to their imaginary security.

Edmund began the confidential discourse, and stated with the ingenuousness natural to him, his situation respecting Lady Laura, acknowledging that he could easily perceive her to be devoid even of common talents, and as deficient in the qualities of the heart as of the head; yet such was his infatuation, that he had not the resolution to avoid her fascinating allurements, though his own folly and the

injustice that he was doing her, were aggravated by the consciousness, that were she even as amiable as she was seducing, he had not a heart to offer in return for that, which she unequivocally told him he had gained.

Clayton smiled at the simplicity of his young friend's narration, but admired the rectitude of principle which occasioned him so much uneasiness. He then, without wounding Edmund's self-love, contrived to convince him, that, in some cases, it was possible to be inconstant, without one party dying of grief, or the other of remorse, a fact always incredulously received by the young of either sex, who are involved in the pains and pleasures of a first attachment, in which real love has however often as little concern, as it had in the present instance. After some further conversation on the subject that pressed so heavily on Edmund's mind, it was succeeded by an enquiry into the dejection which clouded Clayton's spirits. He hesitated for

for a moment, a blush passed across his pale cheek, and Edmund requested forgiveness for having, through anxity, probed a wound perhaps recently inflicted: "No indeed, my dear Edmund," replied Clayton, "my sorrows are neither recent nor real; I have been exactly as you see me, ever since I was a boy. I would willingly tell you my uneasiness, but in good truth it is merely imaginary, or constitutional, and in either view I am ashamed of it. I will, however, relate to you my life, though it is, alas! unmarked by one interesting event, unadorned by one meritorious action; and this conviction makes the retrospect painful."—

"My parents died when my sister and I were in infancy, and the care of us devolved on my uncle, Sir John Clayton, who is one of the oldest baronets in England, and to whose titles and estates, I have the honour to be heir. He has been a father to the orphans left to his charge, and yet his very kindness has been

productive of ill, both to my sister and to myself. From my infancy I had a predilection for study; my uncle's education had been much neglected, and a consciousness of his defects, made him always shun the conversation of literary men. He was anxious that I might be spared any mortification, similar to what he had experienced in their society, therefore was delighted with my evident taste for reading, and encouraged it, by giving me a tutor, who to an extensive acquaintance with ancient and modern authors, added a knowledge of the world, and living manners, rarely found in professed scholars. He had been in almost every part of the habitable globe, had served many foreign powers, and was intimately acquainted with all the European courts. Under his tuition, I devoured learning until every branch of it was familiar to me. I lived n my study, and my sister being left my uncle's sole companion, was taught to know all the points of a horse, as well as any

any of the grooms, regularly went out to hunt, and could bring a bird down with unerring aim. I take shame to myself, for having observed her education, without endeavouring to correct its defects. To confess the truth, I was immersed so deeply in literature, that every other consideration seemed trifling, and my uncle had no idea that his plans could be improved, so long as my sister exhibited in her countenance, the glow of health, and the smile of good humour; accordingly I became a fastidious bookworm, and she an eccentric amazon." Edmund smiled at these sketches, and Clayton proceeded. "The first mortification that I ever knew, was a refusal from my uncle, when I asked permission of him to travel. His reason for the peremptory negative which he put upon my request, was that during his life, he could never part with either of his dear brother's children, the precious legacies of fraternal love, but that at his death,

which could not in the course of nature be long delayed, I should find myself master of his wealth and of my own actions. I was obliged to submit to a control, imposed in so affectionate a manner; I resumed my studies, but I regretted every day that I wasted in retirement, at a period of life, when the perceptions are exquisite, the imagination ready to receive every delightful impression, and youthful hopes on the rack of expectation. My tutor had fired me with disdain for a life of inglorious ease, my heart throbbed with ambition, history and poetry had been my favorite studies, and every page I read, placed glorious examples before my eyes, or in the sweetest strains celebrated exploits, which I contemplated until I longed to emulate them.

"In this frame of mind, I was deprived of my tutor; he died suddenly, and left me almost inconsolable. The solitude or confined society of Clayton Hall, became

came more than ever insupportable to me. My uncle was miserable on witnessing my sorrow; I once more entreated him to suffer me to go abroad, but in vain, I then requested his permission to enter into the army, this likewise he refused, but at last as a compromise, presented me with a commission in the guards.

"I went immediatly to town, to enter on my new occupation, but not to be interested in it, not to be happy.

"I had never been from home before, consequently was an utter stranger to the manners of the higher classes of society, and I soon found that they were not suited to my taste. The men appeared to affect rudeness and indifference, the women contempt of shame, and neglect of virtue.

"Unknown to them when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid frame with finer joy;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve and vibrate through the frame."

"No one seemed to feel as I felt, I saw

ethers rise to the unmeaning routine of the day, not indeed with an air of interest, for that has been long voted out of fashionable faces, but at least with an air of complacency. They idled away the day as a thing of course, and retired to rest perfectly contented with looking forward to a repetition of the same nameless pursuits. Life had not for me "vitality enough to keep it from putrefaction," and loathing its insipidity I looked round for something to give it a relish.

"I associated with wits professed, but I soon found that they laughed at no one's jokes but their own. I entered into literary society, there also I saw that too often admiration of ingenuity and talents, was lost in envy towards their possessor.

The sublime alone could please me, and I despised the little occurrences of life, whilst I sighed for a succession of great events. I sickened at the homage paid to valour, and I plunged deeper into company

company to avoid my own reflections; unfortunately my ideas were too refined, and too far removed from common life to be interested by common scenes, and common actors." He paused, and then repeated from Shenstone, with such pathos that the tears started into Edmund's eyes:

"Ah me, my friend, it will not, will not last,
This fairy scene, that cheats our youthful eyes;
The charm dissolves, th'aerial music's past,
The banquet ceases and the vision flies.

Smit with the charms of fame whose lovely spoil,
The wreath, the garland, fire the poet's pride;
I trimm'd my lamp, consum'd the midnight oil,
But soon the paths of health and fame divide.

And vain are books, the sage's wisdom vain,
What has the world to bribe our steps astray!
Ere reason learns by studied laws to reign,
The weaken'd passions self-subdu'd obey.

Tedious again to curse the drizzling day,
Again to trace the wintry tracts of snow,
Or sooth'd by vernal airs, again survey
The selfsame hawthorns bud or cowslips blow.

Ah no! 'tis o'er! the dear delusion's o'er!
A stagnant breezeless air becalms my soul;
A fond aspiring candidate no more,
I scorn the prize before I reach the goal."

"I am ready to acknowledge," continued

nued he, " that my mortifications have been imaginary, and my disappointments have had their foundation in my own romantic expectations; I regard myself as a mirror, of which the surface, though exquisitely polished, magnifies the failings of those whom it reflects, and which is too brittle so be useful. My ideas have been refined till they have become chimeras, and my sensibility exalted to a pitch of morbid acuteness.

" Last winter I met Lady Rosamond Courtney. In the circle of fashion, she shone like a star of the first magnitude; her beauty attracted me, her talents confirmed my admiration, the haughtiness of her manner did not appear to me a fault; I called it dignity; for I was sick of the condescending familiarity of misses of quality, and I believed myself happy in gaining permission to carry my attentions beyond the mere forms of politeness, and to renew them during the summer at Castle Drelincourt. I fondly thought that

I had

I had at length met with an object in whom I could be interested, with whom life would be desirable; but I am doomed to be disappointed, and love does not favour me with his sweets unalloyed by bitters. I admire Lady Rosamond's charms as much as I did the first day when I beheld her; and her talents yet more, for I daily witness their powers; but in woman, the dignity of Juno and the wisdom of Minerva, is not all that is requisite, the same love of impossibility pursues me: I sigh for perfection amid the frailty of human nature; and I vainly seek in Lady Rosamond, the mild grace and melting sensibility which ought to be the peculiar characteristics of the fair sex. Besides, her behaviour of late to me, is not what I approve, nor ought she to condescend to adopt it. Where a woman will tyrannize before marriage, a man must degrade himself by unnecessary concessions; and it too frequently happens, that after the indissoluble ceremony is past, the man

man assumes his rights with additional severity; and the lady, in the sullenness of despair, submits only from conviction of the fruitlessness of opposition.

"On this subject however, I confess that I ought to remain silent; for, undoubtedly the portionless daughter of an earl, descends from her dignity in accepting the hand of a simple baronet in reversion."

These words, uttered in a severe and sarcastic tone, concluded Clayton's recital; and, after a few arguments on life, and its general disappointments, the gentlemen concluded their discourse, by proposing a stroll during the gleam of sunshine which then appeared.

We hope that our readers have not forgotten the trying situation of Lady Rosamond during the above conversation; and that they have already compassionated the feelings which must have been excited in her breast by the latter part of the

the discourse. She was shocked when she found it was of a confidential nature, as she had flattered herself that it would turn either on literary topics, or that the parties would pursue their respective studies in silence. Whilst however, she hesitated whether or not to make her proximity to them known, every moment encreased her doubt, and the awkwardness of her situation, until she had heard too much to gain credit for disinterestedness in refusing to hear more; she therefore unwillingly remained a listener.

She was much gratified with the sentiments of her lover and Edmund, but when the former spoke exclusively of himself, she could not but be attentive; she heard with pleasure his unvarnished tale, and rejoiced in his unaffected abhorrence of every thing mean or profligate. He mentioned her name, her heart throbbed; she anticipated his praises, and her cheeks were crimsoned with the fear of being unworthy of hearing them in that

that unsuspected manner. But what new emotions did not his words create in her bosom! pride, resentment, self-reproach, wounded love, and mortified vanity, contributed at once to give them poignancy. She heard the whole; tears trembled in her eyes, suppressed sobs filled her bosom, but this was no moment to indulge them; she wished but to escape unobserved; for if she before feared discovery, when she expected only her lover's praises, how did she now dread it, when humiliated by his censure! she blushed, though alone, and must have sunk had any one witnessed her confusion. She was however relieved by the departure of the gentlemen, and she then resolved to go to her room through the same door by which they had made their exit, in order to avoid meeting any one in the gallery, through which she must have passed by the other door. She resolved likewise to take no notice of what she had overheard, but to appear in an unconcerned temper, and to give the presumptuous

presumtuous lover, who could see faults in his mistress, his dismissal, without assigning any other reason than a change of inclination, and an absolute diminution of her regard. If Lady Rosamond had possessed the control over her feelings, which she flattered herself she could exercise, this scheme would doubtless have been admirable, and the sweetness of the revenge that she meditated, might have consoled her for the bitter mortification which gave rise to it; but Lady Rosamond was not quite the stoic she believed herself, for her heart possessed great sensibility, though her pride often steeled her from its attacks. In going out of the library, she unfortunately met her father. Her agitation was too great to escape the eye of parental affection, particularly as she was a favorite daughter. The Earl enquired the cause of it in the tenderest accents. Poor Lady Rosamond, losing the command with which she had smothered her vexation, in a voice, choaked with

hysteric

hysteric sobs and drowned in tears, rashly entreated her father no longer to consider Captain Clayton as a suitor for her favor, but to give him his dismissal immediately. Astonished at the sudden change in his daughter's inclinations; mortified at her rejection of a man, whom he already esteemed, and shocked at the breach of hospitality of which she urged him to be guilty, the Earl employed every entreaty to learn the motives of her conduct, and every argument to shew its absurdity; but his efforts were vain; for though Lady Rosamond was too just to condemn, where she could not believe censure to be actually due, yet was she also too proud to submit to it, even whilst she acknowledged its justice. The Earl was therefore obliged, however unwillingly, to aquiesce in his daughter's wishes. She begged of him to conceal them from the rest of the family; and he, in return, requested her to compose herself, tenderly assuring her, that if he ever appeared desirous of influencing the

the inclinations of his children, in so important a step as that of marriage, he was prompted solely by his anxiety for their welfare, and his regard to their happiness.

Chap. IX.

Rude were the storms which deep thro' my sad breast,
Have striv'n the gems of virtue to expel,
Rebellious passions robbed my soul of rest,
But in despondency's most baleful hour,
I felt within a renovating power
Strengthen my soul, and all at last is well.

ANN BATTEN CRISTALL.

AFTER the relation we have already given, it is unnecessary to inform our readers, that Captain Clayton was civilly informed that the continuance of his addresses was not desirable. Lady Rosamond having gratified her revenge, by the haughty indifference and frigid coldness which she displayed, yet found all her pride insufficient, to prevent her from regretting her precipitance in parting with her lover, whose merits had made

made a real impression on her heart; and the dictates of an excellent judgment, when the clouds of passion, by which it had been obscured, were dispersed, too plainly informed her, that it would have been more consistant with true wisdom to reform her errors, than to quarrel with the condemner of them. But all was now over, Clayton had taken his leave, with manly fortitude, and his sister coolly observing that they were thrown out, and had run on the wrong side of the post, went to the stable to see Highflyer rubbed down preparatory to her departure, and then returning to the house, amused herself in the intermediate time, by cracking a whip with such dexterity, that Lady Maria's nerves, and a valuable set of china, were in the most imminent danger of being shattered.

This unpleasant occurrence, seemed for some time to cloud the cheerfulness of the remainder of the circle. Lady Maria received Breresford's attentions so coldly,

coldly, that he trembled lest dismission should be the order of the day. He therefore redoubled his assiduities, and displayed every day new proofs of his knowledge in the polite arts. The most ingenious and beautifully executed trifles were presented to the insensible fair one, and the newest music, and books, with the most elegant trinkets, daily courted her acceptance; but though our inimitable poet says, "Win her with gifts," yet in the present instance they failed to touch Lady Maria's heart, for its wishes pointed to Edmund, who entangled in an intrigue which he had prosecuted without passion, and continued through irresolution, was deprived of his own esteem, and durst no longer solicit that of an object, whom he secretly contrasted every moment with Lady Laura, and every moment lamented the infatuation which had first led him to forget her worth, but to relieve himself from his uneasy reflections, he continued daily to seek refuge

at Carisbrook Castle, where he was always received with smiles.

One day as he was going thither, he met Clayton, whose eyes beamed unusual animation; far from appearing a despairing lover,—Hope seemed personified in him, and his whole countenance was animated by cheerfulness; "Give me joy, my dear Edmund," he exclaimed, "I am again a lover, a happy favoured lover, the mountain nymph sweet liberty woos my acceptance of her charms, fair science and rosy health join their voices, and to-morrow, I wing my flight to classic ground." After this rapsody, to which Edmund listened in amazement, fearing lest disappointment had ravaged his friend's understanding, Clayton proceeded to inform him that Sir John, highly indignant at the capricious treatment which he had met with, and fearing from the listless dejection of his manner, that it had made a deeper impression on him than he wished to

acknowledge, voluntarily proposed the measure, to which he had before refused to consent, and advised his nephew to resign his commission, to set out immediately on the grand tour, and to spend some time in every place worthy of observation, "The good man," continued Clayton, "lost all his reluctance to part with me, in his fears for my health; and conjured me to make my expedition as pleasurable as possible, assuring me of an unlimited command over his purse during my absence, and reproaching himself with having kept me at home so long; whilst I inwardly rejoiced at the pale cheek, and hollow eyes, which had procured my emancipation, nor did I ever survey my countenance with more complacency, than the moment after its ghastly expression, and cadaverous hue had produced such agreeable effects. For,

"It was not by vile loitering in ease,
That Grace obtained the brightest palm of art,
That soft, yet ardent Athens learn'd to please,
To keen the wit, and to subdue the heart,

In

In all supreme! complete in every part.
It was not thence majestic Rome arose,
And o'er the nations shook her conqu'ring dart,
For sluggard's brows the laurel never grows,
Renown is not the child of indolent repose."

Edmund was delighted with the animated tone in which Clayton pronounced these lines, and congratulated him on his pleasing prospects, assuring him that he should be happy if he could be of the slightest service to him, for which purpose, he would give him letters to many eminent men in Florence, and one to his father, who could introduce him to all the literati in Tuscany, and would be proud of doing it to one, who could so well appreciate their merits.

After some further conversation they parted, with mutual expressions of regard, and Edmund returned to Castle Drelincourt to write his letters. He found the ladies already informed of Clayton's intentions, by means of Henry, who had seen him, and was rallying Lady

Rosamond on the sudden desertion of her lover.

Edmund took his seat near the work-table opposite to Lady Emma, who seemed lost in thought, and employed only in cutting a watch-paper; but though she appeared to move the scissars unconsciously, yet the design was completed with all the elegant exactness, which characterised her most trifling undertakings. "What miserable dogs we male creatures are," exclaimed Henry addressing himself to Edmund, "we are unlucky beings, subject to the arbitrary law of the fair, from whose decree we have no appeal. Here is Rose, not content with depriving her humble adorer of the light of her presence, must banish him even from his native country, and I tremble, lest her cruelty should drive him into uninhabited desarts, or unknown shores: confess, Rose, that you feel some qualms of conscience, some signs of returning love." This was a subject, on which

which Lady Rosamond was ill-disposed to jest, and she replied with a grave countenance, and severe manner, "Love cannot exist without esteem, and I have ceased to esteem Captain Clayton, though I sincerely wish him every happiness." "Ah!" exclaimed Emma, "you are fortunate in self-command, fortunate in being able to withhold love, when you are obliged to deny esteem, for surely it is possible to continue to love, when we can no longer esteem." Edmund felt the full force of these words, and was covered with confusion, when his eyes met those of Lady Emma, who was pale with emotion. A severe sentiment uttered in a bitter tone, was so great a novelty from her, that it drew general observation. "Bravo, my little Emma," exclaimed Henry, "all for love, or the world well lost, I like the noble sentiment." Lady Maria (addressing her by the appellation, child,) enquired with more ill-humour than was natural to her, how long she had been a casuist in the

mysterious science of love? And whence were the sources of her experience? Lady Rosamond coldly observed, that young people would have romantic ideas, till experience taught them their fallacy, and Emma vexed at having betrayed her sentiments, and finding them treated with ridicule, burst into tears, and left the room. Lady Drelincourt mildly reproved her daughters, for speaking harshly to a sister, so gentle and unoffending. Henry laughed, and said, "Women were so fond of mischief, that they would quarrel with each other, rather than not enjoy it." And Edmund retired to the library to commune with himself.—

"Gentle and unoffending, she is indeed," he exclaimed, "but I in wretched folly could throw this pearl away, richer than all its tribe, and for what? For a painted doll, artificial allurements, negative pleasures!" He continued to reprobate his conduct in very severe terms, till he had exhausted all the forms of condemnation

condemnation that he could recollect in English, French, and Italian, he then after sincerely lamenting the past, began to form resolutions for the future, and determined first to go no more to Carisbrooke Castle, which contained no inducement to an honorable man, secondly to listen no more to the suggestions of vanity, which are beneath the consideration of a wise man, and lastly to endeavour to render himself worthy of Lady Emma's love, as including all the real blessings that a well-placed virtuous attachment can bestow. Having made these resolutions he felt more easy, and after having written his letters, was enabled to join the family at dinner, with the serenity which a consciousness of rectitude and honour, never fails to spread over the mind of the fortunate possessor.

Chap. X.

——A prudent father,
By nature formed to guide and rule her choice,
Resigns his daughter to a husband's care,
Who with superior dignity, with reason,
And manly tenderness, will ever love her;
Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant.

THOMSON.

THE tender attentions of a few days, and a continued absence from Carisbrooke Castle, so completely reinstated Edmund in Emma's good graces, that he ventured to request her permission to inform Lord Drelincourt of his love, and solicit him to sanction it by his approbation. The timid and agitated Emma, vainly endeavoured to put a negative on this unexpected entreaty; the words died on her quivering lips; she looked round the room,

room, but her confusion encreased on finding that she was alone with him; she reddened, and turned pale alternately, and Edmund too delicate to add to the embarrassment, from which, however, he drew the most favorable omens, considered her silence as sufficiently consenting to his wishes, and slightly hinting his hope of her suffering him to believe it so; he turned the conversation to a subject less interesting, in order to give her time to recover her tranquillity before the entrance of a third person.

When Emma retired to her dressing-room, she gave way to all the sensations of animated delight, never felt but once, never but on the first avowal of a first lover. In this instance they were perfect; to find the predilection of her heart returned by the homage of the favoured object, unchecked by fears of censure; what more could be desired? Yet, if possible, Edmund's mind was still happier; his present joy was heightened, by con-

trasting it with his past anxiety, and he congratulated himself anew on his escape from the snares of Lady Laura, to the silken fetters of the amiable and lovely Lady Emma. Impatient to assure himself of his felicity, he went immediately to the library, where he fortunately found the Earl alone. He felt himself however considerably embarrassed, scarcely knowing how to begin his love-fraught tale; and as the person to whom it was to be addressed, was deeply engaged in the perusal of a new political work, the awkwardness of his situation encreased, and his courage failed so fast, that he even began to meditate a retreat, when the Earl, lifting his eyes for a moment from the fascinating page, saw in Edmund's countenance things of deep import, and immediately relieved him from the unpleasantness of commencing the conversation, by enquiring, with the utmost good-nature, if he had any thing particular to communicate? Edmund then opened

opened his cause, which he pleaded with the impassioned ardour of youth, ornamenting it with all his natural sensibility and ingenuousness. The Earl heard him with smiles, and stated his objections with tenderness; to the family of the Marchese he could make none, it was noble, and Edmund was the son of his first and dearest friend; his virtues and graces had endeared him to the Earl, who believed that he should place the happiness of his daughter on a solid foundation, by resigning it to one so capable of promoting it. But Edmund was young, and the Earl had an invincible objection to long engagements. He differed from the generality of the world in many of his opinions, and in this among the rest. Far from believing that a long acquaintance between acknowledged lovers was serviceable in strengthening their attachment, and giving them an insight into each other's foibles and peculiarities, he thought it too often happened that in the course of

four or five years, (a term not seldom recommended by prudent parents and guardians) the interest of love, and the charm of novelty, gave way to a disadvantageous familiarity, and an indifference only to be distinguished from friendship, by being more selfish and less interesting. Nor did he think the knowledge of disposition, which time might be supposed to bestow, any compensation for these disadvantages; as he was convinced that gross vices, or faults, could not be concealed even in a limited acquaintance; and he did not believe, that, on a more intimate one, a marriage had ever been broken off, from the discovery of what might be called trifling failings. He knew enough of the human heart, to be assured that pride, and the dread of censure or ridicule, frequently overpowers the scruples of of timidity, or fears for futurity; which, however they may create distrust, are seldom active enough to be serviceable n removing the possibility of subsequent

quent uneasiness. He stated his opinion to Edmund, who willingly acknowledged its justness in every case but his own, and in that he pleaded for an exception with so much energy, that the Earl was persuaded, and endeavoured to believe himself convinced. He told Edmund however, that the conditions must be mutual, and their agreement exactly understood, and faithfully observed. That if he gave his consent for Lady Emma to receive Edmund's addresses, it must likewise be with the approbation of the Marchese, and on a promise of waiting till a period judged proper and eligible by the parents of both parties, before the marriage should take place. That in the interval, as, on account of residing under the same roof, the greatest delicacy and propriety of conduct were requisite; he must on no consideration solicit the society of Emma alone, or pay her in company the inordinate and exclusive attentions, never excusable but when the opportunities of shewing

shewing them might be rare and uncertain. In short, the Earl wished Edmund to shew his love by silent tenderness, and respectful deference, rather than by servile adulation and marked civilities. He repeated to him, in order to soften the apparent severity of these injunctions; that as his attachment was not likely to be tortured by opposition, or embittered by absence, it ought to be manifested with dignity, and pursued with moderation.

Edmund listened with the utmost respect; and conviction attended the arguments which he heard. Conscious of his own sincerity, and satisfied of Lady Emma's, he perfectly agreed with the Earl, that it was unnecessary to be continually proving by words, what should never be doubted from his actions, and that where there was no sentiment which required concealment, stolen interviews were as unnecessary as degrading. He likewise readily promised unbounded compliance with every desire of the Earl, whom

whom he thanked in terms of the warmest gratitude for his paternal kindness and indulgent friendship.

It was soon understood that Emma was the object of Edmund's love, and she received the congratulations of her sisters, on her conquest of the handsome and amiable Italian. Lady Maria turned pale, as she pronounced his name: from the first week of his arrival, she had indulged a secret partiality for him, and was never more sensible of its force than when she contrasted him with Breresford, whose good-nature, unassuming deportment, and gentle disposition, combined with unceasing attention, had gained a large share of her esteem; but in Edmund she found as much gentleness, and more softness, he was also equally unasuming, yet nobly brave; and had a soul abounding in the finest sensibility, tempered with manly firmness; which, added to his numerous accomplishments, and personal graces, certainly made him a formidable rival

rival to poor Breresford. No sooner however was Lady Maria acquainted with his decision, than, abhorring the idea of endeavouring to rival a sister, by alluring the object of her affections, yet dreading her own weakness, which might lead her to betray her passion, she wisely resolved to deprive herself of the power of erring, by yielding to the entreaties of Breresford, and consented that their marriage should take place early in the spring. The delighted lover immediately took his leave, to make the necessary preparations; and the family were left to themselves, excepting Mr. Fletcher, who was indeed never considered as a stranger, and now devoted himself with the most friendly anxiety, to amuse Lady Rosamond, over whose fine features, since the departure of Clayton, a cloud of regret would sometimes pass, notwithstanding the care with which she endeavoured to conceal the least appearance of uneasiness.

Chap. XI.

Domestic happiness the only bliss,
Of Paradise that has survived the fall;
Thou art the nurse of Virtue.

COWPER.

THE Earl was now at leisure to shew a little more attention to his ward, than he had hithero been able to devote. Henry's attentions to her were continued, but with his volatile disposition, it was impossible to be inattentive to a young lady, particularly in the country, where there was no variety of choiee, or room for caprice; and it was easy to discern, that these attentions were more the effusions of gallantry than the dictates of the heart; they therefore afforded little pleasure to his father, who saw likewise with regret, that

Lady

Lady Harriett's mind, if not a barren desert, was however an uncultivated waste; and his mortification was encreased by observing also that all his endeavours to fertilize it, were unsuccessful. Lord Drelincourt had too high a relish for the delights of literature, and had in his own family witnessed the advantages resulting from a taste for them too often not to be anxious to inspire his ward with the same sentiments. A love of literature, had guarded his son from the ruinous and degrading effects of vice and dissipation; and had preserved his daughters from the unmeaning frivolity of some ladies of quality and the unblushing effrontery of others. He saw his family respected and happy; their conversation could not be heard without pleasure, or attended to without instruction, and the hours flew unmarked, but by that increase of mental riches, which a judicious use of them bestowed.

Unhappily Lady Harriett had no idea of

of the real value of time, and if she ever thought of it, her only study was, how to trifle it away with the most ease to herself. When she first came to the Castle, ashamed of being idle where every other person was constantly employed, she had endeavoured to find occupation in the same elegant pursuits, which afforded delight to all around her; but the very perfection that would have encouraged any one possessed of a spark of emulation, to endeavour to profit by it, disgusted the indolent Lady Harriett, who soon ceased to imitate where she despaired of equalling: her crayons were thrown aside, because she could not bear to see her imperfect attempts, compared to Lady Rosamond's elegant designs; and the little music that she had learnt, was lost by not practising, for she had just ear enough to distinguish between her own feeble attempts and the finished performances of the three sisters; nay, even needle-work was neglected, because she found

found that Lady Emma not only excelled her in the finer branches of it, but could perform the minutest trifles, with a delicacy and exactness which she vainly endeavoured to imitate. Reading she never could be taught to consider as an amusement; and such was her desultory mode of conducting it, that even in the perusal of a novel, she had the childish and impatient folly to look at the conclusion, as soon as she was interested in the commencement. Lord Drelincourt, always anxious to exhibit instruction in its most pleasing form, one evening turned the conversation to that branch of literature; which, though deservedly esteemed the most superficial and useless, is yet studied so universally, as to make it a serious object of criticism. He had taken from his ward's work-box a book, the alluring title of which he read aloud, as follows, "The Mysterious Cavern, or the Phantom of the Abbey, a tale of mystery and horror." The cheeks of the owner were crimsoned with

with blushes, whilst she inwardly acknowledgeded, that, however the title might have raised her expectations of pleasure, from the perusal of a work so mysterious, and consequently so interesting, it was more adapted to catch the eye, than to please the ear. Her guardian good-naturedly relieved her confusion, by saying, "Do not imagine, my dear Lady Harriett, that I am going to criticise too severely, the sort of reading to which your sex are, in general, partial; that they should be so cannot excite surprise, for a ficticious work, considered merely in the light of amusement, certainly possesses advantages over many others; no previous knowledge is required, the subjects are generally of such a nature, as to be easily comprehended by the most ignorant, and sometimes so interesting, as to excite anxiety even in the most indolent. I repeat therefore, that I am not surprised at the avidity with which works of the imagination are perused, neither will I entirely

tirely condemn the perusal of them; I have never wished to prohibit novels in my family, and I am only anxious to warn you against the abuse of them; an objection has often been urged against them, which is certainly a very important one, that truth appears insipid to those, who are delighted with fiction; Beattie says,

"Eyes dazzl'd long by fiction's gaudy rays,
In modest truth nor light nor beauty find."

"But this, though too general a consequence, is not a necessary one, and a person who is really fond of reading, and anxious to acquire information, will not long be content to peruse adventures, differing from each other, only in the names of the parties concerned in them. However my intention at present, is not to enter into dissertation on the advantages and disadvantages, arising from the study of novels, but simply to enquire, who

who are your favorite authors, and what are the beauties you particularly admire in each?" He might as well have enquired what she thought of the perpetual motion, the quadrature of the circle, or the everlasting lamps of the antients, as Lady Harriett could just have replied with equal readiness. Favourite authors she had none, for she most impartially read every novel that was published, and to enumerate the peculiar beauties or excellencies in any, was utterly out of her power; for she read with too much rapidity and too little attention, ever to be able to form an opinion of the real merits of a work; the utmost praise therefore that she could bestow on any, was to call it pretty, an epithet applied by her, to every thing that claimed her approbation, whether tender or sublime, grave or gay, lively or severe, all were pretty; though she never could explain in what their prettiness consisted. The Earl was mortified at receiving no other answer to his enquiries

enquiries, concerning her opinion on the most popular novels, than that she had almost forgotten them, but that she believed she had thought them pretty; he ceased questioning, and made the discourse general. "If," said he, addressing himself to Mr. Fletcher, "Fielding has been charged with not sufficiently attending to the morality of his heroes, what shall we say of Smollet, who appears to have delighted in exhibiting human nature in its worst colours? He seems incapable of delineating an amiable character, his heroes seldom possess any claim to the affection, or simpathy of his readers, and if he accidentally introduce a virtuous person, it is generally in a subordinate view; and to be abandoned with the utmost indifference, as soon as he is no longer necessary to the story: this is a great fault, and considerably lessens the pleasure, which the reader would otherwise receive from his easy manner of depicting life, with every scene

scene of which, he was thoroughly acquainted, being perfectly familiar with all the varied minutiæ that he so accurately describes." "Yes," said Mr. Fletcher drily, "I acknowledge he may be clever, but I own I feel no great interest in his Roderick Random, after he pulls the ears of his faithful Strap, whose money he has lost at the gaming table, and I cannot help thinking, that Smollet, in a similar situation, would have behaved in the same manner, by the coolness, wholly divested of reprehension, with which he relates the circumstance." "That," said the Earl smiling, "is being too severe on poor Smollet, Johnson said, in reply to some one, who in order to enhance Garrick's merit as a performer, asserted, that by the force of his genius, he actually imagined himself Richard the Third, whilst representing that character. 'Then, sir, if he actually believed himself to be Richard, he deserved to be hung, as much as Richard did.' And you seem

to think, that Smollet could only relate the actions of his heroes so naturally, because he himself would have acted, as he describes them to have done." "No," replied Mr. Fletcher, "I wish not to condemn him, but I confess, that if I had been a Strap, I would not have served a Smollet." "Well," said Lady Rosamond, "you professed to speak of novelists of the present day, and I am impatient to improve by your criticisms, only beware how you break a fly upon the wheel." "That is far from my intention," returned the Earl, "I mean merely to remark upon some of the principal authors of the day, and to the credit of the ladies, I am happy to find that they consist chiefly of the fair sex. I will place Mrs. Radcliffe the first on the list, not that by so doing, I mean to acknowledge her as the most perfect writer, but as she has introduced into this country a new species of writing; a species which Horace Walpole seems to have foreseen, when

when he says, 'I believe it very possible to invent a story, of which all the events shall appear supernatural, and yet shall in the conclusion be all naturally accounted for.' In his Castle of Otranto, he has given a specimen of the kind of writing, to which he alludes, and that work may perhaps be regarded as the foundation-stone of the marvellous style, which is at present so much in vogue, and in which, Mrs. Radcliffe has had a croud of imitators, without one rival; for to her alone it has belonged, to make improbabilities pleasing. By the great springs of terror and pity, she obtains unlimited command over the minds of her readers, and the most powerful emotions are excited by her interesting narratives; but her peculiar excellence, consists in the striking situations, into which her characters are thrown; they are conceived in the true spirit of genius, and were I a painter, I know not any modern works, that would afford so many

grand and speaking scenes, as are offered by the fertility of her imagination, and the sublimity of her ideas. To illustrate them with the pencil, would be a design worthy of a Beauclerc, nay, even of the lovely princess, whose talents are as exalted as her rank. I have often wished to mention this to you my dear Rose, I think from the works of Mrs. Radcliffe, you could furnish another room, in as interesting a style, as that which you have decorated from Milton; allowing something for the peculiar advantages of his subjects." Lady Rosamond's eyes were cast down at this address, and the tears which filled them could not be entirely concealed; she recollected that Clayton had made the same remark, and the wish to please him, had animated her to excel in her attempt; her father observed her emotion, and without waiting for an answer, kindly continued. "Having paid due acknowledgments to this queen of terrors, I will proceed to express my admiration

admiration where universal praise is given, to the nature-drawing pen of Mrs. D'Arblay; her Cecilia is a constellation of beauties, and if there be one fault in that charming performance, it arises from an exuberance of genius, which delineates every actor in it as a character, and paints them in the strongest though most varied colours; by this means she sometimes destroys the appearance of reality, for in real life most people 'have no character at all;' this however, is a fault with which her novel of Camilla cannot be charged, nor do I know one more simply interesting. The picture of an amiable family, must ever be so to the affectionate and unsophisticate mind, and though I am well aware that with many, I should find my opinion singular, I must yet acknowledge, that Camilla is the work of this charming writer, which I the most admire." Fortunately Lady Harriett had just read this favorite novel, and ventured to say so, adding that she thought it very pretty.

ments of her mind from foreign sources, instead of relying on its native wealth, though from the purity and splendour of the specimens which she affords us of it, all other aids appear superfluous." "Her delineation of female characters," said Lady Rosamond, "is exquisite; they are all that a woman would wish to see in her sex represented, and Miss Owenson shews at once what a female ought to be, and what she is capable of being." "I grant her all her merits," replied the Earl, "and am very ready to rank her among the first writers of the present day. There are undoubtedly, many others very ingenious, but I do not admire the melo-compositions, of some gentlemen writers, who blunt the edge of their wit, by loading the pages of a novel, with latin and greek notes, to shew their learning, or make them the vehicles for serious discussions on literature, politics, and even religion. I would have a novel a pleasing natural description of events, which might

might happen in real life, conveying an useful moral in its conclusion, and drawing characters as they in general exist; such as may be imitated or shunned, accordingly as they are virtuous or vicious, yet not coloured until they are all perfection, or all vice, faults very common with common-place writers, who generally draw in extremes, and make some one unfortunate character the scape-goat of the piece, dismissing him or her at its close, loaded with all the enormities of vice, and responsible for all the misfortunes of the innocent."

And here, lest our readers should think us in danger of falling into the very error condemned by Lord Drelincourt, of entering into dissertations foreign to the subject, we shall take the liberty of concluding the conversation, much to the joy of Lady Harriett, who was in the utmost dread of again being called on to give her opinion, though she was astonished that the Earl should mention so

few authors, and wondered how he could omit, "The Mystic Cottager." "The Delusions of Sentiment." "Mysterious Horrors." "The Fair Orphan." "Child of Wonder." &c. &c. &c. All which she had read, and thought very pretty.

CHAP. XII.

Faire was the day, but fairer was the mayde,
Who that day's morne into the green woodes strayde;
Sweet was the ayre, but sweeter was her breathing,
Such rare perfumes the roses are bequeathing.

W. BROWNE.

WHATEVER might be Henry's failings, that of indolence certainly did not enter into their catalogue. He was fully sensible of the value of time; and though he might occasionally waste it in dissipation, he never lost it in sloth. He adhered invariably to Lord Chesterfield's advice, in never suffering the hour of his retiring to bed, to influence that of leaving it; and it would be well, if those young men, who most scrupulously observe all the censurable parts of his lordship's doctrines,

did not in their haste to practise them, entirely overlook the really valuable instructions which are to be met with in his works.

The hours gained by Henry before the family assembled, were spent in reading or writing, and generally concluded with a stroll into the park, or shrubberies; in which he was always now accompanied by his friend Edmund, who was as active, and as early a riser as himself.

One morning they were taking their usual promenade, but finding that they had more of the company of a certain gentleman named Boreas, than was agreeable, they proposed turning back; when their attention was attracted by the sylph-like figure of a young girl, whom, by a sudden angle, they discovered within sight of the house, and who was too busily employed in recovering her shawl from the rough attack of the gentleman above-mentioned, to see that she was observed. She was simply attired in a brown jacket and

and petticoat trimmed with blue; on her head she wore a straw bonnet, tied down with ribbons of the same colour; and the friendly zephyrs that deprived her ivory neck of its covering, also set at liberty a profusion of chesnut coloured ringlets, which shaded and contrasted its whiteness; whilst every gust dicovered a foot and ancle of the most delicate symmetry. She appeared *à la distance* like some cottage girl, but surely the loveliest cottager that ever was beheld; and the young men at that instant discovering that the morning was fine, and the breeze refreshing, resolved to take a nearer survey of the fair stranger. She advanced a few steps, till the encreasing narrowness of the path, obliged them to rouse her attention, for they were under the necessity of standing still, to let her pass. Surprise and confusion crimsoned her lovely face, when, on looking up she saw how near to the house she had unconsciously approached, and she hesitatingly endeavoured to apologize

logize for her intrusion, "I fear—I hope, —I have not exceeded proper limits," said she, in sweet, though trembling accents; "but we understood that Lord Drelincourt kindly wished strangers to enjoy the beauties of his grounds, and we have been therefore encouraged to—." She stopped, unable to proceed, for Henry's admiration was too evident, not to distress her. The unfinished speech however was not that of a cottage-girl, though Henry was bent upon still thinking her one. He took the opportunity of her silence to say, "Your presence can never be an intrusion, but an honor to any place that you adorn with it; every lady, however, who enters this part of Lord Drelincourt's grounds, is expected to pay the tribute of a salute, to a person whom he appoints to receive it, and I am happy to say, that I am the fortunate man so empowered." "I did not know, sir," replied the young incognita, the deep blush of anger suffusing her cheek; "I did

did not know, that in any part of his lordship's domains, a female was liable to meet with insult, and I shall be careful how I expose myself to it for the future." She was turning away, but the volatile incorrigible Henry, forcibly seizing her hand, exclaimed, "Now, upon my soul you are too cruel, I meant not to offend, and, as a proof of what I assert, I will be contented to accept, as a pledge of your forgiveness, that which I have a right to demand." Resentment flashed in her eyes; "Begone, instantly," she exclaimed, raising her voice, "or suffer me to go, and do not force me to wound the feelings of my father, by calling him to see his child insulted. His misfortunes have not yet sufficiently humbled him, to bear that patiently." The agitated girl here touched a string which vibrated to her heart, and she burst into tears. Edmund was shocked, and tenderly taking the hand which she had snatched with disdain

disdain from Henry, he implored her to compose herself, and pardon the thoughtless gaiety of his friend, who, he would pledge his own honor, meant not to hurt her feelings by disrespect. "Suffer me then," said the weeping girl, "to return to my father; he desired me to continue my walk, whilst he rested from the fatigue of coming here; already he will think me tardy, and I fear his affectionate eyes will see that I have been disturbed." Henry now apologized, with unfeigned sorrow, for his foolish levity, and begged that he might conduct her to her father, to whom he would repeat his apology; but his request was refused with modest dignity, and at Edmund's entreaty, the parties separated. Henry, however, was not of a disposition to be easily repulsed, and returning immediately home, he dispatched his valet to gain intelligence of the wanderers, and took his station at a window, commanding a view of the road into the village; whence he had soon the pleasure of seeing the

the lovely girl advance, supporting an old veteran, who leaned on her with one arm, whilst the other was rested in a sling. This circumstance, joined to his military air, authorized Henry to conjecture that he belonged to that profession, where honor is too often the sole reward of bravery. Nor was Lord Courtney, in this instance, mistaken; his trusty emissary soon returned with the information, that the gentlemen's name was Macdonald, that he was a Captain in the —th regiment of foot, and had lately returned from America, where he had buried a beloved wife; that grief for her loss, and the irritation of a wound, received some time before, had thrown him into a bad state of health, and that his physicians had prescribed his native air, as the only chance of saving his life. "He lodges, my Lord," continued the faithful narrator, "at the little white cottage, at the foot of the hill, not a quarter of a mile from the gates; the young lady is his only child, and

and they walk in the grounds every morning; I met them, my Lord, returning home; the gentleman has been a fine man, but he looks very ill, and I believe he is only in confined circumstances, poor gentleman; but his daughter is very pretty, and so dutiful, that the old people at the cottage say her father doats on her, and cannot bear her to be out of his sight; she is, indeed, very pretty." "Enough," interrupted Henry; for though under the necessity of employing a servant, he yet felt degraded in listening to him, and had sufficient delicacy to be mortified in hearing a female, for whom he already felt a penchant, made the theme of his valet's praise.

The obsequious Dawson made his bow, and withdrawing to form his own conjectures as to the enquiries of his master, Henry was left to ruminate upon the plans, necessary to be formed, in order to become a villain.

The day after this adventure, he requested

quested Edmund to accompany him in a ride, adding, that he had determined to call on Captain Macdonald, and apologize for the familiarity with which he had treated his daughter, as he could not bear the idea of appearing to intentionally insult a worthy and unfortunate gentleman. This resolution appeared so proper to Edmund, that he willingly agreed to accompany his friend on so laudable an expedition; their horses were accordingly ordered, and they sallied forth. They soon came within sight of the cottage, in the front of which grew two elms, clipped by the fanciful hand of the owner, who was a gardener, into the forms of peacocks, agreeably to the fashion of the last century; and he was, at that moment, employed in pruning the luxuriance of their tails, and giving an account of the variety of monsters which his ingenuity could shape, to a young lady in a white frock, who stood near him, and whom Henry's beating heart soon recognized,

cognized, as the same that he had wilfully mistaken in her humble garb for a cottage girl. She was laughing at the old man's ideas on taste in gardening; for he was warmly regreting the disuse of what he called ornament; but, on looking towards the road, she ran into the cottage, and left him to conclude his disertation alone. To her surprise she saw the objects of her alarm alight; she went from the window and endeavoured to conceal her blushes; she heard voices on the stairs, and her whole frame trembed; her father must inevitably have remarked her confusion, but at that instant the strangers were announced, and his attention was called to them. Henry saw immediately that his conduct had not been mentioned by the young lady, and, at the same moment, he determined to be no less lenient to himself than she had been; not a word of the apology therefore passed his lips; but his behaviour was, in every other particular, marked by the most respect-

ful

ful politeness. The manners of Captain Macdonald were polished, his appearance highly interesting, and his conversation animated and instructive, to a degree that made Edmund soon attend only to him, whilst Henry discoursed in silent eloquence with the lovely girl, who sat at her father's feet, and affected to be wholly engaged in caressing a lap-dog; but the lively crimson which dyed her cheeks, when her eyes, lifted up for a moment, met those of Henry, and the arch smile that played upon her lips, sufficiently betrayed that the favoured Pompey did not engross the whole of her attention. After an agreeable visit, lengthened beyond the mere forms of ceremony, Edmund and Henry took their leave; the latter assuring Captain Macdonald, in the politest manner, that Lord Drelincourt would have the pleasure of calling on him, after which he should hope to see him at the castle; begging in the mean time that he would send for fruit, venison, or any thing which might

might be agreeable or serviceable in his weak state of health. The interesting invalid gracefully thanked Lord Courtney for his attention, adding, " I have trespassed on Lord Drelincourt's kindness ever since I took up my abode here, by making his grounds my constant walk; but of late, my foolish Mary," smiling affectionately on his daughter, " has deprived me of that pleasure: she was frightened one morning by meeting a dog, when she was alone, and I never could persuade her to walk there after, though she repeatedly acknowledged, that it was only a puppy which had so much alarmed her." It was not Mary alone who blushed at these words, and Henry replied, with same confusion, that, though he was glad the cause of her fright was so harmless, yet he was sorry Captain Macdonald's walks should be interrupted by any thing unpleasant; but that for the future, he would take care to prevent every obstacle, and hoped to have the pleasure of seeing them resumed.

On

On their departure, the young men found ample food for conversation. Edmund admired the fire of the old veteran, tempered with an interesting melancholy, which at once announced that he had been unfortunate, and undeservedly so. Henry dwelled on the animated graces of the daughter, her native innocence, and unaffected modesty; and from that day, he thought only of cultivating an acquaintance, which he had so fortunately commenced. It was easy to prevail on the Earl to honor the Captain with a visit; to be poor, infirm, and unfortunate, were always claims on his compassion; but when, added to these, he heard that Macdonald was a brave officer, and a man of family, he felt that he also owed him his respect.

CHAP. XIII.

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with want and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink.
Till wrench'd of every stay but heaven,
He ruined sink.

BURNS.

CAPTAIN Macdonald was highly gratified by his lordship's attention, though his health declined too rapidly to allow him to profit much by it. Henry was a frequent visitor at the cottage, and his conversation and soothing kindness relieved the hours of pain, and enlivened those of languor. The Captain was fond of chess, and Henry frequently played with him; whilst Mary, working by her father's side, lost all fear of the puppy that had alarmed her

her in the park. Henry had the resolution to treat her merely with civility, and the kind of affectionate politeness due to an amiable child, as he always affected to regard her. Unfortunately the Captain considered her entirely as such, and he would often expatiate to her, on the humane attentions, and compassionate friendliness of Lord Courtney, as wonderful in a young man of his rank, particularly when joined to such varied talents and inexhaustible spirits. But he never for one moment suspected that any motive, more powerful than compassion, urged the constancy of these visits.

The winter was now rapidly advancing, and Captain Macdonald's worn-out constitution, appeared incapable of resisting its rigor. Henry was shocked one day to observe an evident change in him; for though the motives of his intimacy, could not for a moment bear scrutinizing, yet it was impossible not to become attached to the society, and charmed with the vir-

tues of the very man, towards whom, seduced by the sophistry of self-love, and encouraged by the relaxed morality of the present day, he was meditating an injury " sharper than the serpent's tooth." Captain Macdonald saw the emotion which Henry could not hide, and after thanking him for his numerous attentions, he added, " I fear I shall never have it in my power to shew you, that they have not been bestowed on one, ungrateful for them. I am well aware of my danger, and as a christian and a soldier, I can meet death with resignation and courage; but as a father, I shrink from it; you, my Lord, have seen the innocent gaiety, and the unceasing affection of my poor child; ever since her mother's death, she has been my hope and solace; Alas! I shall leave her unprovided for, and unprotected; and this sad reflection renders her presence, which was my sole pleasure, now painful to me. I cannot, my Lord, give a greater proof of my esteem

esteem for your character, than in the request I am about to make. You have already conferred favours on me, which as a stranger I could not have hoped for; add to them yet another; promise me, that when I am no more, you will condescend to procure a safe and reputable conveyance for my Mary into Scotland. She has an aunt, who lives near Glasgow; a woman of family and fortune, who is her only relation, but who has never been her friend. Poor Child!" added he speaking quickly, and a flush passing across his cheek, "poor child! she must learn to bear the taunts of ill-natured pride, and the sneers of insolent wealth, but she will not, cannot, be refused an asylum, where she may be safe, if not happy." He paused, but his fine expressive eyes enquired most eloquently of Henry, if his hopes might be indulged? and the appeal to a heart so good and tender, was not made in vain. Lord Courtney looked earnestly upon him, and in proportion to the con-

fidence expressed in Macdonald's animated though grief-worn countenance, his self-reproach was increased. "And I," he mentally exclaimed, "was about to deprive this brave and unfortunate man, of his sole remaining treasure! I would have planted a dagger in his already lacerated bosom, and under the sacred mask of friendship, have dared to meditate an injury to him, which my heart's blood could not have expiated!" Need we add that the agitated repentant young man, solemnly promised to do every thing that Macdonald should require, his quivering lip, his tears and varying complexion, were vouchers of his sincerity. Macdonald saw, believed, and felt comparatively happy.

Let us do Lord Courtney the justice to declare, that at this moment he most devoutly meant to perform every thing that he had promised; but let no one depend on his own strength, the safest way of conquering temptation, is to avoid

avoid it, for security begets danger, and the most virtuous of men, cannot say that he is safe from the snares of vice.

A few days after this conversation, the sufferings of the brave and unfortunate Macdonald were concluded, and he found that repose in death, which during life had been denied to him.

He had at an early age married a beautiful and amiable young woman, against the consent of her parents, and to the inexpressible anger of her eldest sister, whose heart had been freely offered to his acceptance. "Earth has not rage like love to hatred turn'd," and the young married couple found in the rejected fair-one, an enemy as active and powerful, as she was malignant and inexorable. By her arts, a reconciliation with the parents was rendered impossible, they died leaving their entire property to the eldest daughter, and their unaltered displeasure to their youngest, who on her knees conjured permission to see them for one

moment, and was refused. She willingly left Scotland, rendered hateful to her by the cruelty of her sister, and the death of her parents, and after some time spent in England, accompanied her husband to America. The brave are not always fortunate, and Captain Macdonald was an instance, that merit may sometimes be conspicuous, without being rewarded. Ever the foremost in danger, he was repeatedly wounded, and in attending on him during a dangerous illness, occasioned by receiving a ball in his breast, the delicate frame of his wife sunk under bodily fatigue, and mental uneasiness. His newly gained strength was so severely tried by grief for her death, that a relapse was the consequence, and he was only restored from the brink of the grave, by the assiduous cares of his daughter, who buried in her anxiety for her remaining parent, her anguish for the one whom she had lost. He would immediately on his arrival in England have proceeded northward,

northward, determining to forget in his affection for his daughter, his just resentment against the sister of his injured wife; hoping to succeed in working on her tenderness, or rousing her remorse so far, as to procure a home for his friendless girl; but the mild air of Devonshire, was so strongly recommended to him, that he resolved to spend the winter there, and defer his journey into Scotland until the spring. The spring he was not permitted to see, but his last hours were soothed, by the cheering thought, that he had raised up one friend for his child, and by an involuntary pleasing hope, that if she were refused an asylum, or rendered unhappy with her aunt, Lord Drelincourt would through his son's representation, procure her an eligible situation in some respectable family; he could not refrain from imparting to her, the consolation that he felt, he conjured her to be virtuous, as she hoped for happiness, adding "When your conscience reproaches you,

my darling Mary, think that you have caused your parents a pang, and I am sure the punishment will warn you not to incur it again, by a repetition of the offence. I have recommended you, my child, to Lord Courtney, he is amiable and good, and I trust that Lord Drelincourt will also befriend you if you require aid. We may be permitted to watch over thee, my darling, therefore think not that thou art left alone in the world; trust to God, and to thine own integrity." He had made a strong effort to finish his sentence, and exhausted by it, he fell back on his pillow, clasped his daughter's hand, and spoke no more.

Chap. XIV.

Be obstinately just,
Indulge no passion, and deceive no trust;
Let never man be bold enough to say,
Thus far, no farther shall my passions stray,
The first crime past, compels us into more,
And guilt grows fate, which was but choice before.

HILL.

NEED we describe the agony and dismay of the innocent, deserted Mary? Ah, no! which of our readers have been fortunate enough never to have wept the ravages of death, never to have felt the melancholy void which his triumph leaves in the aching heart? This poor girl, left at the age of sixteen, without a home, without a protector;—deprived of her only parent, whom she adored; thrown on the wide world in utter ignorance of its ways; no

no one to direct her, no one to confide in! her anguish amounted to agony; and during the first few days after the melancholy event she was on the verge of despair.

Can it be wondered at, if in this situation Lord Courtney appeared to the solitary sufferer as a guardian angel? can it be wondered at, if she wept with softened grief when she saw his tears flow likewise? and can it be wondered at, if the enamoured Henry felt all his affection encreased, as he endeavoured to console this lovely child of sorrow?

In respect to her affliction, he had forborne to visit her till the evening before the funeral; when, being anxious to take every trouble of that mournful ceremony, he was under the necesity of going to the cottage, and could not resist the temptation of sending to enquire after her, whilst she, ignorant of form, unsuspicious of ill, following solely the dictates of her heart, requested to see him. The interview

view was pathetic, though short. Henry, much affected by her father's death, solemnly vowed never to forsake her; and her heart sinking under anxiety, and oppressed with woe, expanded to the appearance of affection; and, from that moment, admitted unconsciously, a warmer sentiment than it had ever yet received.

Edmund willingly accompanied Henry to Macdonald's grave; and after the last offices were performed to the lamented dead, they paid their respects to the afflicted Mary, who appeared yet more lovely in her sable garbs. Her cheek, blanched by sorrow, was tinted with a faint blush, and the traces of tears remained on it, as dewdrops tremble on a white rose. The gentle languor of her manners, the affectionate gratitude with which she received every endeavour to console her, powerfully interested the feelings of her visitors. When they left her, Edmund was eloquent in her praise, but Henry was silent, for

his mind was a chaos, and his thoughts not to be expressed by words.

A few days after this visit, Lord Drelincourt was expressing his pity for the fate of Captain Macdonald, and enquired what had become of his daughter? Henry hastily replied, that she had gone according to her father's desire into Scotland, where she had an aunt in genteel circumstances, and who was her only relation. "I am glad of it," said the Earl, "I wish she may be comfortably situated, and if she had been left utterly unprotected, I would have endeavoured to procure her some agreeable situation." "Poor child," said Lady Drelincourt, who was composed of every feminine virtue, "she should have been welcome to reside in my family, and with needle-work, and reading to my daughters, I dare say she would have spent her time very pleasantly." The conversation dropped here, but Henry's agitation whilst the subject continued, did not escape Edmund's observation; he, however, accounted

counted for it in his own mind, very easily, by conceiving that Henry had involuntarily engaged his affections more than he suspected, till absence had taught him the extent of his attachment. With this idea, Edmund was perfectly satisfied, rejoicing that the object of temptation was removed, and hoping that Henry would soon recover his usual chearfulness, of which he had been somewhat deprived by the recent melancholy event.

After this, every thing went on much as usual, except that Henry conceived a violent passion for field sports, in which, however, he was so little successful, that he was frequently absent for whole days without being able to produce a single brace of birds, as vouchers of his skill; and, whether he were fatigued by his exertions, or mortified to find them thrown away, was not easy to determine, but it is certain, that he frequently returned home out of spirits, and out of humour; even his attention to Lady Harriett

riett slackened, she was therefore obliged to console herself, by a yet closer intimacy with Miss Dunderton; and there was seldom a day passed in which the young ladies did not see each other, or exchange epistles, where warmth of expression, and luxuriance of imagination, were more conspicuous than grammatical propriety, or classical elegance. Mr. Fletcher continued to be a frequent guest, and Lady Rosamond appeared more amiable in his presence, than at any other time, for she valued his esteem, and was anxious to deserve it. Lady Maria, finding beauty a very insufficient foundation on which to raise esteem, endeavoured to rouse herself from mental indolence, and bodily languor; whilst Mr. Breresford, whenever he visited the Castle, conscious how nearly, at one time, he had lost her affections, sedulously imitated the manners of his involuntary rival, laid aside his most effeminate habits, and discovered, at every visit, some interesting trait, or pleasing accomplishment.

accomplishment. As for Edmund and Lady Emma, every day heightened their mutual regard and confidence, and made them more sensible of the happiness which they enjoyed in each other: Love had struck them with his golden-pointed dart, and his flame glowed in their hearts with congenial steady warmth, which required not to be encreased by opposition, or exalted by misfortune.

In this state, Christmas was spent in the elegant and hospitable abode, where Lord Drelincourt always celebrated it, according to his ideas of feudal magnificence, and English liberality. He thought that every nobleman should devote half of the year to the services of his country; and to the other half, he believed that his tenantry and the abode of his forefathers had a claim. He abhorred watering-places, and all the public rendezvous of vice and dissipation; justly thinking, that the money lavished in them, was wasted on the most worthless part of society, whose extortion

tortion and imposition were systematic; and that, whilst a crowd of hair-dressers, valets, perfumers, cooks, gamblers, and fortune-hunters, were enriched by the prodigal hand of luxury, worthy tradesmen found their industry unavailing, and their respectable families brought to ruin, from three-fourths of their capital being detained for years in right honourable imprisonment, whilst the humblest remonstrance produced no other effect than contemptuous silence, haughty surprise at plebian insolence, or threats, to which the sufferer would willingly submit, of withdrawing favors, that generally carried ruin when they were conferred. Our fashionable readers will doubtless exclaim, These ideas may be extremely fine, and perfectly correct, but they are certainly rather singular, and not very reducible to practice; whilst, if we could suppose for a moment, an industrious tradesman wasting his time in the perusal of these volumes, we could likewise imagine him eagerly

eagerly enquiring, if this Lord Drelincourt were meant to represent a character from real life? and, on receiving an answer in the negative, we can see him shake his head, and hear him say, "No, I might have known that it was a fiction."

But Lord Drelincourt was not only singular in paying his bills, though that circumstance alone, might have ranked him amongst the oddities of the day, he had likewise many other remarkable sentiments and customs. He actually thought that the fashionable phrase of liberal opinions, meaned laxity of morals; and he could not content himself with the wisdom of philosophy, and religion of nature; but did verily go every sunday to church, requesting his family to do the same; and this, not merely from a conviction of the importance of example to those less exalted, and less enlightened than himself, for then he might have been excused by policy, but he openly acknowledged, that he believed public worship to be a devout

vout and reasonable service, due from man, and acceptable to God. After thus unwarrantably betraying opinions, long since obsolete, we will give our readers time to recover from their surprise, and leaving the family at Drelincourt, to the enjoyment of their rational amusements, and antiquated ideas, we will attend upon the proceedings of Captain Clayton, for we must not deprive him of the title, to obtain which, many a young man has devoted himself to the service of Mars, however destitute of real military ardour. We will therefore continue to call this gentleman Captain Clayton, particularly as we do not mean to keep him for the remainder of this sublime history in Italy; but, before we recount his adventures there, we will conclude this chapter, and introduce him with all proper respect in another.

CHAP. XIV.

At once my soul from bright ambition won,
I hugg'd the dart I wish'd to be undone;
No more pale science durst my thoughts engage,
Insipid dullness hung on every page;
The midnight lamp no more enjoy'd its blaze,
No more my spirit flew from maze to maze;
Thy glances made philosophy resign
Her throne to thee, and every sense was thine.

CAWTHORNE.

WE do not mean to enter upon a recital of Clayton's extacies, as he viewed with enraptured eyes the master-pieces of art, which every where met his astonished sight. The language of admiration is unfortunately not sufficiently new to afford our readers much gratification; and we wish rather to treat them with the beauties of nature, and of a more modern date, than these famed subjects, which make us feel, that, however enlightened, and accomplished

complished the present age may be, it has much to attain before it equal the perfection of some by which it has been preceded.

Know then, gentle readers, that after Clayton had filled many letters to England, with more animated accounts, and chearful descriptions, than it was becoming in a discarded lover to have been able to send; instead of flying altogether from the haunts of men, he even carried his perfidy so far, as to think that the society of the Marchese di Rodalvi would be an addition to his pleasures, and formed the resolution of presenting his introductory letters, the first day that he could abstract his ideas from the splendid collection of every gratification to a lover of the fine arts, which Florence at that time afforded. Chance, however, spared him the trouble of a formal introduction, and gave him one infinitely more agreeable to himself, and more interesting to the family.

Returning

Returning one evening from a delightful day's excursion into the country, he was riding by the side of a beautiful shrubbery, in that indolent humour, which is sometimes felt, when the sensations of tranquillity are so pleasing, that their cause is not enquired into, through the fear of destroying their charm; suddenly however the shrieks of females put all his serene sensations to flight, and clapping spurs into his horse's sides, he darted forward with a rapidity of lightning, and was followed by two servants, who emulated their master's speed. Directed by the piercing sounds which still continued, he soon reached the spot whence they proceeded, and saw three men masked, two of whom were forcibly dragging a lady towards a carriage. Fear had deprived her of power to resist, she was insensible, and the opposition proceeded from another female, whom the third man restrained from going to the assistance of her friend, though he

he could not prevent her shrieks, which rent the air. At this instant Clayton appeared, "Cowards!" he exclaimed, "base unmanly cowards, instantly relinquish the object of your insulting violence, or expect the punishment that you deserve." One of the men who seemed to be the principal, answered with a voice almost choaked by passion, and in a language unknown to Clayton, who in the hurry had spoken in English; but the stranger's gestures were *translatable* into every language, for he drew his sword, and his attendants followed his example; Clayton's would have done the same, but they had unfortunately no other weapons than one pistol, which their master seized, and held to his opponent's breast, whilst the squires engaged very valiantly in the cause of their respective principals. The Englishmen cracked their whips, the strangers flourished their swords, and talked in the unknown language, whilst their opponents wondered who they were,

and

and what they were talking about. At last for the honour of old England, they resolved to come to closer combat, and accordingly ran suddenly on the enemy, regardless of the glittering steel, whilst the masks not relishing the biting arguments of English whips, which came with all the advantage of novelty, and severe application, were soon thrown off their guard, submitting to have their swords beaten out of their hands, and at last taking refuge in flight, notwithstanding the imprecations, which the stranger poured forth in various languages, with a fluency that astonished Clayton, who could not but be entertained by the inexhaustible variety of his epithets. Finding however that he could be understood, he began to parley with him in Italian, whilst the lady who was set at liberty by the flight of her guard, gave to one of Clayton's servants, a direction in English to the chateau, from which she had unfornately wandered out of hearing. When the

the assaulter found that there was a probability of an addition to the enemy's forces, he thought it prudent to make peace on any terms, he therefore condescended to say that the young lady, whose terrified senses were only just returning, was his sister, and had escaped from a convent in Portugal, that he was her guardian, and as she had refused to return willingly to his protection; he had thought himself authorized to employ stratagem and force. "Speak, wretch!" exclaimed the fraternal protector in a voice of thunder, "speak to confirm my word, and thine own dishonour." His accents might have almost awakened the dead, but not trusting to words only, he accompanied them by an herculean grasp, that seemed powerful enough to destroy the delicate frame, which he still supported. "Ah! my God," exclaimed the unfortunate female, in a voice that thrilled through Clayton's soul, "suffer me to die in peace, oh! my brother,

ther persecute me not in the grave." She closed her eyes and seemed actually departing to seek refuge in death; her inhuman brother seeing domestics approaching, would have flung her to the ground, but Clayton caught her in his arms, and the ferocious tyrant darting a look of ire upon him, sprang into his carriage, and was in a moment carried out of sight, by four fleet horses. It was now nearly dark, the lady, who appeared to belong to the chateau, leaned against a tree in silence, which Clayton was too much absorbed in thought to break; all the tenderest sympathies of his heart were awakened, and he could not refrain from repeatedly pressing to it, the injured object, who still remained as he thought, lifeless in his arms. We say as he thought, but though he might be deceived, that is no reason why our readers should, and we will candidly acknowledge to them, that the agitated girl was not quite so inanimate, as to be wholly unconscious

of the interest that she had inspired, but not knowing exactly how to behave, she suffered her timidity to seek shelter under the appearance of insensibility, and was rejoiced, when the arrival of the domestics relieved her from her embarrassing situation. Clayton resigned his charge reluctantly to the care of two servants, who had brought a chair for her, and would then have taken his leave, but the other young lady advancing towards him, with an air of nobleness, tempered with softness, said in the most pleasing accents, "No, sir, that I must not allow, add another favour to the signal one, which you have already conferred on us, and permit me to give my father the Marchese di Rodalvi, the pleasure of thanking the deliverer of his daughter's friend." Could Clayton resist? Impossible!—He went, and whilst the young ladies had retired, to calm their spirits after so alarming a rencontre, he made the Marchese acquainted with his name, and intimacy

intimacy with the Count Rodalvi, by that means increasing the prepossession already felt in his favour. Whilst they are talking over affairs foreign and domestic, asking, and answering, a thousand anxious questions concerning Edmund, Lord Drelincourt, and the rest of the Marchese's friends, we will attend a few minutes to the female branches of the family. "Heavens, my dear Claudina!" exclaimed the beautiful Everilda, "what a wretch is that vile Don Lopez, he deserves to be put into the inquisition, for his shocking oaths, I wish I were one of the officers, he should see it in all its terrors, and I daresay he would then never mention the name of convent, or bear with that of priest, again." "How unfortunate I am," exclaimed Claudina, tears stealing down her pale cheeks, from a pair of fine black eyes, "alas! I never knew the transports of affection in my own family, my heart overflows with sensibility, and had it not been for your friendship, and

the kindness of the Marchesa, it must have broken." "Do not distress yourself, my love," said the amiable Marchesa, "your society, makes us happy, and I trust that in time we shall be able to enjoy it without interruption. Do not weep, my dear Claudina, you are yet agitated, but adjust your dress, and come into the saloon, you ought to thank this valiant stranger, surely he equals Orlando, or Rinaldo, or any other hero however renowned, and we have now an admirable opportunity of displaying our genius, by celebrating his exploits in an epic poem." Claudina smiled, and a faint blush passed across her cheek; she however begged to decline seeing him again, and Everilda kindly offered to stay with her. Now Claudina, like many others of her sex, when her request was complied with, became less anxious to abide by it, she hesitated, begged that she might not detain Everilda, and at last owned that perhaps company might amuse

amuse her spirits, and that if she found it over-powered them, she would retire.

With Clayton's ardent and romantic disposition, it was natural that he should be very anxious to see the fair objects, whom he had rescued from violence. The tones of their voices were extremely pleasing, but with their features he was entirely unacquainted, as they were both veiled, and the evening was too far advanced, to permit him to make any observations. In this uncertainty it is not to be wondered at, if the time of their absence appeared tedious, his eyes wandered frequently to the door, which at length opened, and three ladies entered; the first was introduced as the Marchesa, the second, whose paleness, langour, and dejection, proclaimed that she it was, whom he had rescued from fraternal tyranny, as Donna Claudina, Louisa, Elvira, de Gomez, and the third beautiful as one of Mahomet's fabled houries, as Signora di Rodalvi. Now by all

the laws of romance, we ought to make the valiant knight vow everlasting fidelity to the fair one, for whom his conquering arm had put a host to flight; and this was certainly what he had already intended, but unfortunately, he intended also to find her, "All that painting could express, or youthful poets fancy when they love." Such was one of the ladies, but not the one whom he had expected to find so. The delicate languor, the interesting sensibility, the melting tenderness, of Donna Claudina, could not be seen without being felt, but the brightness of Everilda's beauty made every other fade in the comparison; she was now in her twentieth year, and in the meridian of her attractions; her height rose to the majestic, her eyes were of a dark hazle, and expressed most eloquently, every emotion of a noble, ardent, and generous, though uncontrollable soul, her complexion was not very fair, but it was clear, and heightened by a bloom

a bloom of nature's deepest and richest dyes; her bright brown hair curled in a profusion of natural ringlets, and her animated expressive countenance, received a thousand additional charms, from the harmonious tones of her voice, and the enchanting natural graces of her figure. She was one who could inspire only violent passions, if admired it must be with enthusiasm, if loved, to distraction. If Clayton had been struck with Lady Rosamond, in whom dignity supplied the place of female softness, how was his admiration now excited by one, in whom dignity and sensibility were joined? If Lady Rosamond's talents had gained his homage, notwithstanding the repulsive manner in which she often displayed them; what was not due to Everilda, who combined every varied power to please, with an unwearied desire to exert them? The ardent Clayton soon devoted his glowing heart, entirely to one, who appeared so worthy of it, he

no longer complained of the insipidity of life, but of its shortness; his whole soul was filled with the ardour of his passion, he lived only to love, but with the unconquering timidity of a real lover, silence closed his lips, though the dictates of his heart continually hovered on them; in the presence of his mistress he gazed on her in mute admiraton, but in absence he delighted his imagination by talking to her.

CHAP. XVI.

Ye cruel maids!
When first ye 'gan to weave my woof of fate
Ye dy'd it with the roseate hues of spring.—
At length the raven croak'd, with joy ye snatch'd
The cords of woe, and dipp'd th'unfinish'd web
Deep in the pitchy waters of despair.

SAYERS.

NOW, Cupid being one of the most mischievous urchins, that ever existed, not contented with making such havoc in the hitherto stoical heart of the philophical Clayton, did likewise most wilfully and maliciously wound, and disturb the peace of the gentle and unfortunate Claudina. This young lady's destiny had been singularly pitiable; with a heart cast in nature's softest mould, a disposition peculiarly amiable, and manners the most

interesting and affectionate, she had been the victim of unkindness, chilled by neglect, and discouraged by insult. It was her misfortune to be born too soon. The first three years of her life were the only happy ones that she had ever known. She was then the darling of her parents, and undoubted heiress of a large fortune, left by an uncle to her father's eldest child, unless he, or she, embraced a religious life, in which case it was to devolve to the next; or if there were none other, it was to endow an hospital for thirty decayed noble Castilians. In the fourth year of Claudina's age her parents were made happy by the birth of a son, and from that moment, all her wretchedness commenced. This darling son, who was to transmit the family-name to a hundred generations, was unfortunately likely to succeed to more titles than estates, but the parents lamenting the untoward circumstance, luckily recollected, that if they could not enrich him, Claudina might;

might; and from that instant it was decreed that she should. But to effect a change of prospects, a change of inclination was also necessary, and the little lively Claudina, was to be metamorphosed into the devout and pensive nun. Now this was far from an impossibility, and might have been easily effected by kind and docile means, for even at that early age the child gave strong proofs of the tenderness and sensibility which were afterwards matured in the woman. But her parents wisely took her, at six years of age, from an elegant nursery, where she had always had a croud of playfellows, deprived her of her toys and sweatmeats, and sent her to board in a convent, seldom going to see her, and then only to reprove her, and repress by sternness the emotions of her affectionate heart, which not all their cruelty could teach her to stifle.

In this convent her acquaintance commenced with Everilda, who was sent to it

for education, on account of the Marchese having a sister who resided in its vicinity. Their intimacy soon grew into a lively friendship, and her attachment to Everilda, was one great source of the firmness with which the timid novice resisted the stern mandates of her parents; the severity of the rigid nuns, and the caresses of the artful ones. She looked with horror on vows, which would separate her from the only friend that she had ever known; and that friend possessing, at all times, a a soul impatient of controul, disdained it in the form of tyranny, and fortified with her spirited advice, and independent opinions, the drooping spirits and wavering resolutions of the distressed Claudina. Even her timidity was worked on by Everilda, who drew in lively colours, the offence given to God, and the mockery made of religion by those who professed a sacred call to a life which they loathed, and who claimed merit for offering to heaven a heart, polluted with worldly

worldly desires, and the repinings of discontent.

The death of Claudina's parents made no change in her situation, but that of giving her, if possible, a still harsher guardian, in the person of her brother, whose remonstrances were so unceasing, and accompanied with such cruelties, that the gentle object of them, sunk under their force, and seemed ready to resign a life, made wretched by unkindness. Everilda's warm and generous heart bled to see the ravages made by grief in the lovely frame and delicate constitution of her friend, for whom she earnestly requested an asylum with her parents. Her wishes were no sooner mentioned, than compliance prevented their repetition. In this case there were additional motives for their gratification. The Marchesa was one of the most compassionate and tender of her sex; she sympathized in Claudina's trials, and wished to alleviate her sorrows; Everilda's petition was likewise made a few

few days after Edmund's departure, when her spirits were yet saddened, and her parents were anxious to see them restored by the society of one whom she loved so well, and who was so deserving of esteem.

Stratagem was opposed to force; permission was given to Claudina to spend the day with Everilda's aunt, whom she frequently visited, and the moment she was beyond the walls of the convent, a light carriage with four horses offered freedom to her, and never stopped till she was out of her brother's jurisdiction. She was received with raptures by her friend, and in the elegant society of the Rodalvi family, began to taste of happiness, though she led a retired life, from fear of her brother, who left no art untried to bring her once more within his power: and indeed every day that she was out of it, was of consequence, as his office of guardian was limited to a certain number of years, which was now nearly expired; for his father, either repenting on his death-

death-bed, the cruelty that he had shewn his daughter, or not being so charmed with his son's disposition, as to think proper to trust entirely to it, did not wish to extend the power he should give him over his sister too far. We have already related the consequences of the young ladies having imprudently lengthened their walk much further than usual; and we have now to relate other trials, as severe, and almost as fatal, which befel this unfortunate fair one, though arising from a very different source.

CHAP. XVII.

———See
The bitter fruits of thine unhappy love!
It blossomed sweetly, and thy cheated hopes
Were promis'd, that its bloom should last for ever;
What can'st thou wish? What state of life become thee?
Go from the world, which has no corner in it
That will receive thee kindly, but that cloister,
Whence had'st thou ne'er been drawn thou had'st been happy.
VICTOR.

CLAUDINA's heart, naturally tender, lavished its sensibilities on those to whom she was indebted, with a warmth, proportioned to their paucity.

She revered the Marchese; she regarded the Marchesa as a mother, and was attached to the interesting Everilda, by every tie of friendship and gratitude, but she was soon convinced, that yet stronger sentiments

sentiments could exist in her heart; she found with mingled fear and pleasure, that she loved, and for sometime engrossed by the delights of a new and secret passion, she felt not even the necessity of participation. Every day her attachment gained strength, for every day she gazed on her preserver, and his speaking countenance, his facinating manners, his animated smile, and cultivated mind, were not to be attended to with indifference. One day he was unusually brilliant; intelligence flashed in his eyes, transport smiled on his lips, and as though common language could not express his sentiments, he breathed on his flute the most captivating melody. The susceptible Claudina was overpowered by her emotions, she left the room, and wandered trough a grove, where every gale wafted fragrance, and seemed to inspire happiness. "Yes," she exclaimed, clasping her hands, and raising her tearful eyes to heaven, "yes I love! oh delightful passion,

passion, till I knew thee, I knew not the value of existence. Ah heavens! who can renounce the world, whilst in it can be experienced feelings such as mine? And what would they have been in the convent of Sainte Frances! I love, and surely I love not alone, no, I feel also that I am loved." And now, lest our readers should think that they have caught us napping, as has been the case with greater authors than we are; or lest Clayton may be accused of inconsistancy, or Claudina of vanity, we think it incumbent on us to declare, that though she was mistaken, her mistake was very excusable.—Clayton's soul overflowed with love, and the tenderness of his accents, the sensibility of his glances, might have misled those more versed in the language of passion than Claudina was, particularly if their wish was "father to the thought." It was natural for her to imagine when in Everlida's absence, his voice trembled in addressing her, and his eyes were fixed

on

on her with the most expressive softness, that she inspired his emotions, and though it was possible, it was certainly very improbable she should divine, that his thoughts of the absent, influenced his behaviour to the present, that his love for one, prompted his attentions to another, that his softness was involuntary, his accents tender as his thoughts, and yet these thoughts fixed upon another. Surely Claudina could not be expected to imagine any thing so cruel, and happy in the idea of being loved, she wished not to be told that she was so. The delusion however was not to last long, and on the very day that it was at its height, the charm was broken, she had returned to the apartment where she had left the family, and advanced into it, before she preceived that Clayton was there alone. She was hastily retreating with that excess of caution, by which even the wisest sometimes betray themselves; Clayton however prevented her design, and taking her hand, enquired

enquired in the softest accents, though mingled with evident perturbation, if she had seen her friend? She answered in the negative. He then asked, if she had seen the Marchese, or Marchesa? and received the same answer. "Well," he exclaimed, leading her to a seat, "they have left me here quite solitary, but you will not desert me also?" Claudina answered only by the liveliest blushes, and a sweetness of expression in her countenance, which could scarcely be equalled by Everilda's beauty. Perhaps the moment in a female's existence, which conveys the purest rapture to a susceptible heart, is that, when the declaration of his passion, hovers upon the lips of her lover, when she witnesses her own triumph in his anxiety, and anticipates the delight of consoling him.

Such, at that moment, were Claudina's feelings, she feared to breathe, lest she should dissolve the enchantment with which she seemed surrounded; and dreaded even

even the tones which vibrated to her heart, lest they should break the spell. "Shall I hesitate," said Clayton, "to speak to you on a subject which has long occupied my mind? Knowing your sensibility, am I presumptuous in hoping to interest it in my favor? Ah! Claudina, excuse my freedom; my heart disdains forms, tell me, if with so much softness you have never loved." He paused, and Claudina blushing yet more deeply, essayed to speak, but her eyes met his, and her unfinished words expired on her lips. "Speak, Claudina," he continued, "my dear friend, friend of those whom I love, answer my question, or suffer me to conjecture the cause of your silence." Claudina, conscious of it, was easily alarmed, and hastily replied, "Alas! I have never known any who wished for my love; never any who deserved it, till fortune atoned for the unkindness of nature, in giving me invaluable friends among strangers." The contrast afforded by her present

sent situation, to that which memory recalled, filled her eyes with tears; she paused, and Clayton continued, "May your love be propitious on whomsoever you bestow it; he must be happy; but my fair friend," continued he in a livelier tone, and taking her hand with a smile, "as you hope for success yourself, plead for me with one, over whom your influence is great, let me implore you to exert it in my behalf; you tell me that you are my debtor; procure me a favor greater than life; procure me Everilda's consent to make me happy, and you will bind me to you for ever in the chains of gratitude." He felt the hand that he held become cold and inanimate; he looked up, and beheld Claudina, who seemed in a moment "transformed by grief to marble, and appeared her own pale monument." Surprised and shocked, he one minute suspected the truth, and the next condemned himself for the vanity of the romantic thought. However, delicacy restrained

restrained him from calling for assistance, and he was happy to perceive that it was not long necessary; Claudina revived to anguish, disappointment, confusion and despair. Clayton cast his eyes to the ground in silence; and Claudina, bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Wretched that I am, when shall I know peace? why did I refuse a safe asylum from unhappiness? why did I expose myself to the attacks of fortune, who has already so cruelly persecuted me?" She wrung her hands, and seemed utterly unconscious of any person being near her, till suddenly recollecting herself, she instantly turned to the astonished spectator of her grief, and with admirable presence of mind, and an unembarrassed air, which could not fail to impress conviction, said, "How weak, how very weak, sir, I must have appeared to you: excuse the little command that I have shewn over my feelings. I have no friend but my Everilda, and the dreadful idea of being deprived of her, quite overpowered

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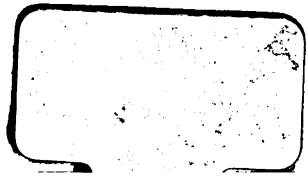
The

The enamoured Clayton having gained the consent of the Marchese and Marchesa. to address their daughter, was one of the happiest of men, and most attentive of lovers, even the volatile Everilda, seemed touched by his sincerity, and gratified by his excessive homage. He appeared daily to gain ground in her affections, and his frequent letters to England, were filled with the most rapturous praises of her beauty, her accomplishments, her virtues and innumerable graces. We will now leave him to make sonnets on his fair one's eye-brows, whilst we return to the family at Castle Drelincourt.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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